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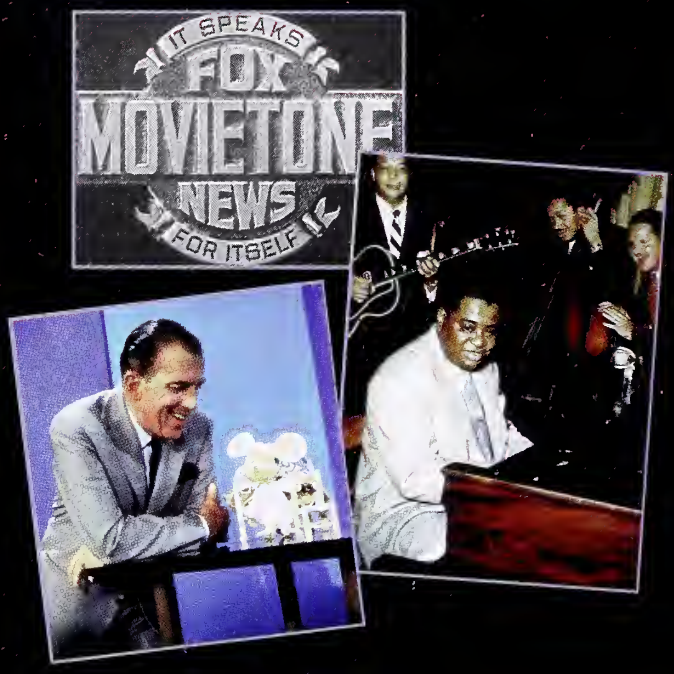
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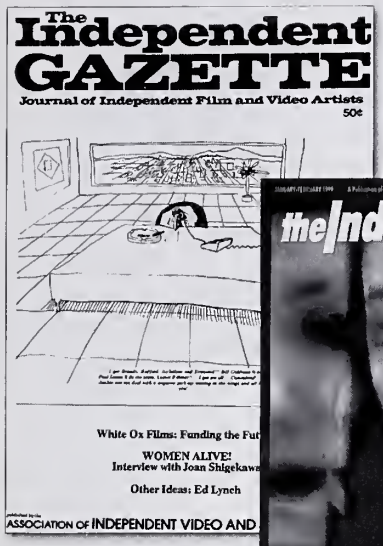
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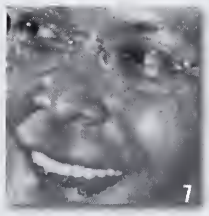
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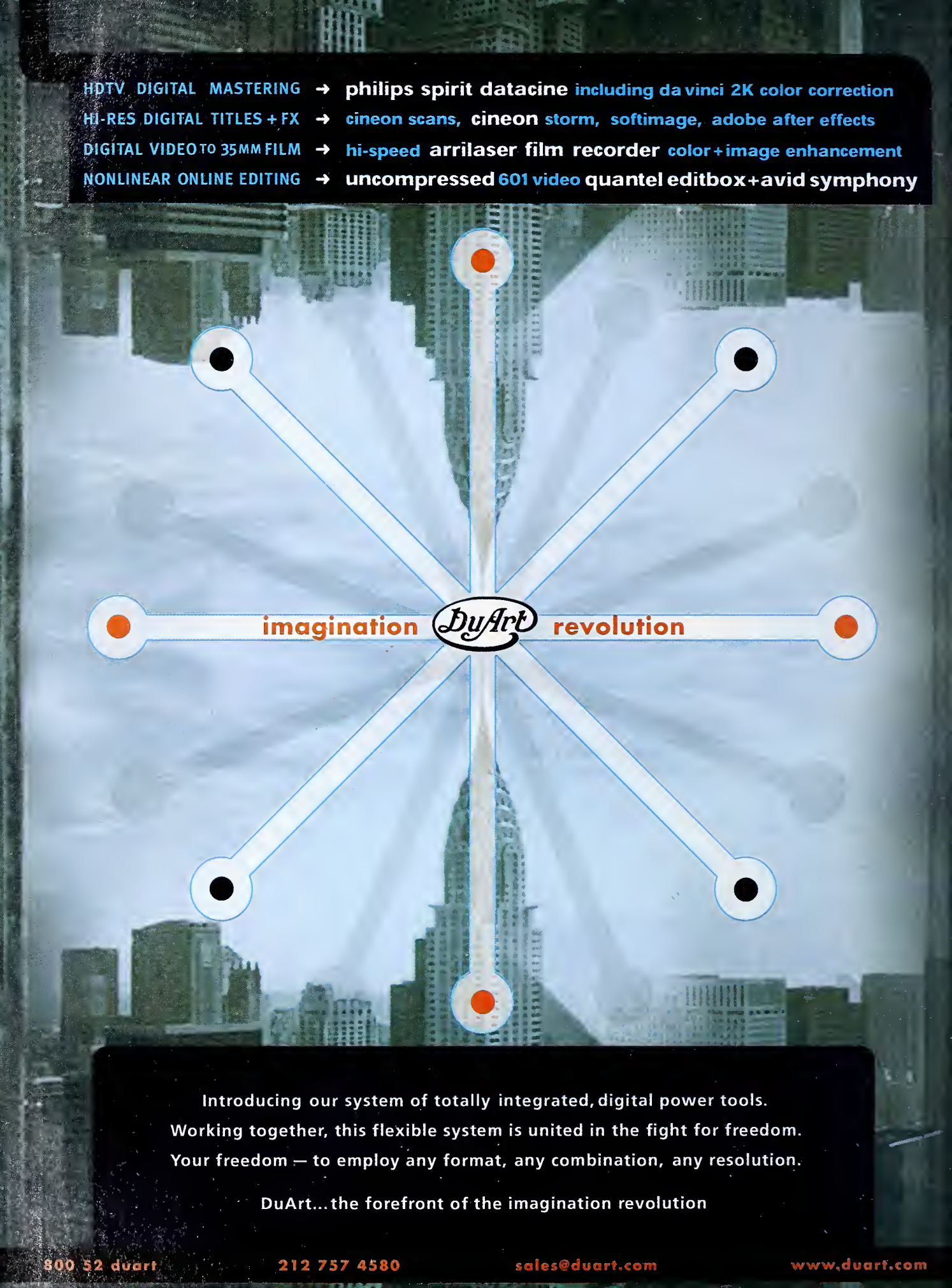
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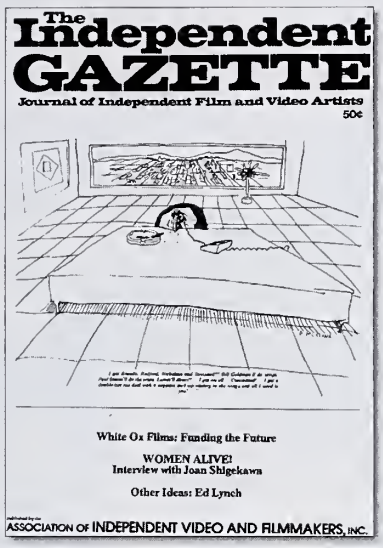
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COVER: The LegaSea underwater time capsule, one of many such cultural containers featured in Cathleen O'Connell's upcoming documentary, *Time Capsule: Message in a Bottle*. Cover photo: LegaSea; opposite: Westinghouse Museum; courtesy filmmaker


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THIS YEAR AIVF TURNS 25. TIMES HAVE certainly changed since its founding. *The Independent Gazette*—the forerunner of this magazine—made its debut in July 1976 with a cartoon on its cover lampooning the cigar-smokin', wheelin' dealin' Hollywood producer type, who is shown shouting into the phone, *"I got Brando, Redford, Nicholson, and Streisand!!! Bill Goldman'll do script, Paul Simon'll do the score, Lumet'll direct!!! ... I got a double-tier tax deal with a negative pick-up waiting in the wings and all I need is you!"*



If the feisty, grassroots independents of the '70s couldn't get far enough away from Hollywood's corporate power-brokers, that's hardly the case for all independents today. The term "independent producer" has expanded to include those who would *love* to see Jack Nicholson attached to their film, and wouldn't mind a negative pick-up deal, either.

But some things never change: The concern with funding. The interest in new technologies, particularly those that are low cost. Understanding the fine print in your distribution contract. Copyright law. Opportunities on cable. Case studies of how other independents get their projects done. . . . Significantly, this list is a run-down of the articles in *The Independent Gazette*. The fact that it would also make a nice editorial package today shows just how much independents still have a need of solid, pratical information. And that's precisely what AIVF and *The Independent* have aimed to provide all these years.

In this first issue of the new millennium, we take a look forward and a look back. To celebrate our 25th anniversary, we're initiating a monthly column that revisits past issues of *The Independent*. To remember what "independent film" was like in the seventies and what it has become today, we talked to Emmanuel Levy about his book chronicling that history, *Cinema of Outsiders*. And to assist film historians of the next millennium, we've invited 12 film professionals to assemble the film/video component of a Y2K time capsule.

For my part, I'd enclose every back issue of *The Independent*, which (all bias aside) has been one of the best and most thorough chronicles of independent film and video as it has evolved during the last quarter of the 20th century. And on the capsule's kryptonite frontispiece, I'd engrave the founding principles of AIVF, as stated in *The Independent Gazette*:

1. The Association is an organization of and for independent video and filmmakers.

2. The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job, that it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.

3. The Association works, through the combined efforts of the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to insuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4. The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5. The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

What better set of resolutions for the new year?

— *Patricia Thomson*, editor in chief

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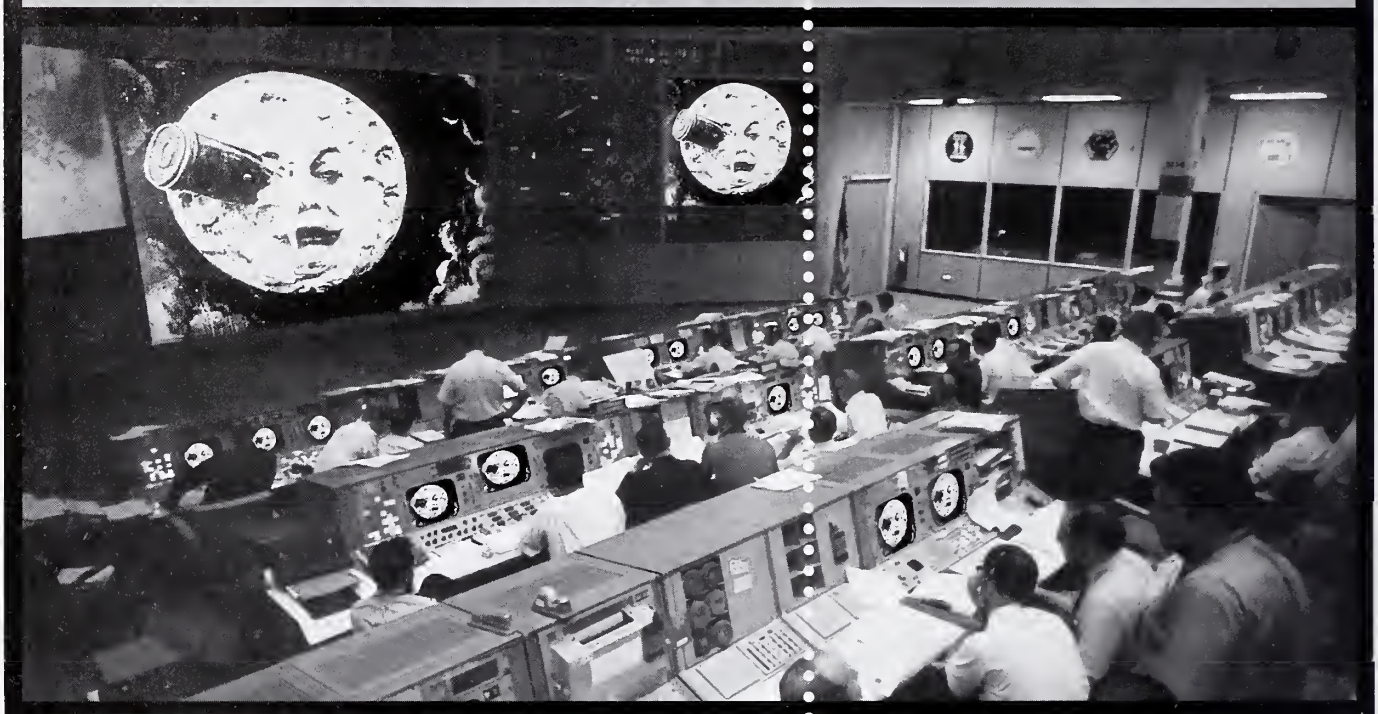


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HASTA LA VISTA, PRIMETIME

Spurned by the major networks, Latinos apply pressure through a TV boycott.

THE "BROWN OUT" OF MAJOR TV broadcast networks in September didn't generate widespread tune-out among Latinos, but it did get media play. Larger agitation around the diversity issue by Latino and other minority groups, including the NAACP, also won some discrete responses on the networks' part and seems to have built momentum for future activism.

Last spring, two things happened: the Screen Actors Guild released statistics showing the number of TV and film roles going to minorities had declined for the first time since the union started tracking the diversity employment figures in 1992. Several weeks later, the big four TV networks—ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox—unveiled a fall season without a lead African-American or Latino character in any new show. Minorities took notice. While NAACP president Kweisi Mfume charged a virtual whitewash of the networks and threatened to bring suit, Latino leaders took bolder action, urging constituents to "brown out" the networks from September 12–25.



Felix R. Sanchez, president of the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, which was one of the catalysts behind September's "brown-out."

At the outset, some Latino journalists criticized the boycott as a weak political move. The coalition of groups assembled by the National Council of La Raza "were advocacy organizations used to dealing with everything from the insulting thing senator so-and-so said to immigration issues. Their specialty was by no means media," says James Garcia, editor of *Politico*, a magazine of Latino political news. "They put it together on the fly. It would have been helpful to have had a mechanism set up by which they could measure [success]."

But while the organizers talked of the boycott dismaying TV advertisers and thus getting the networks' full attention, they also say the boycott was never intended to generate widespread tune-out, only to raise awareness in the entertainment industry. "If we can educate a large proportion of the community and others who are interested in this issue, then we've succeeded," La Raza spokesperson Lisa Navarrete told the Associated Press. In the history of network television, there has not been a Latina cast in a lead role, nor a show about an intact Latino family, save for *I Love Lucy* and a little-known ABC program called *Condo*, says Felix Sanchez, president of the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts. "That means literally we have never visually captured a Latino family as a functional and integrated unit," he says. Through the boycott, organizers hoped also to raise awareness in the Latino community, Sanchez continues. "When you have never had a presence on television to begin with, there is not a high expectation that there should be a strong presence."

The networks responded by pointing to existing minority roles, some on ensemble programs such as *ER* and NBC's new *Third Watch*. They also expressed their commitment to diversity and promised to increase the number of minorities in significant roles. CBS defended its record, according to *E! Online News*, by noting that 11 of its 19 series would have minority characters in "primary" roles in the fall and by pointing to its development of a new program for January 2000 launch, Steve Bochco's *City of Angels*, which will have a primarily black cast.

In recent months, the industry has responded more concretely, says Sanchez. Time-Warner and Disney-ABC agreed to establish internship programs for his foundation's scholarship recipients. The foundation awards money to graduate students aspiring to write, produce, and direct. CBS recently announced it was developing a new series with director Gregory Nava (*Selena*). Nickelodeon announced two new shows targeting Latino children, while WB, which escaped criticism because it's had a more diverse lineup, announced plans to produce Latino-themed series.

Looking ahead, the NAACP and La Raza have established a committee of four co-chairs who plan to sit down and strategize with network execs, says Sanchez. The Latino groups are also considering buying stock in parent companies of the networks, as NAACP did recently, which would allow them into shareholder meetings to voice concerns.

The NAACP seems headed toward its own "much more dramatic" boycott of a television network in January, and if it does so, the Latino groups will join the effort, says Sanchez. January is when TV's creative minds are planning new shows.

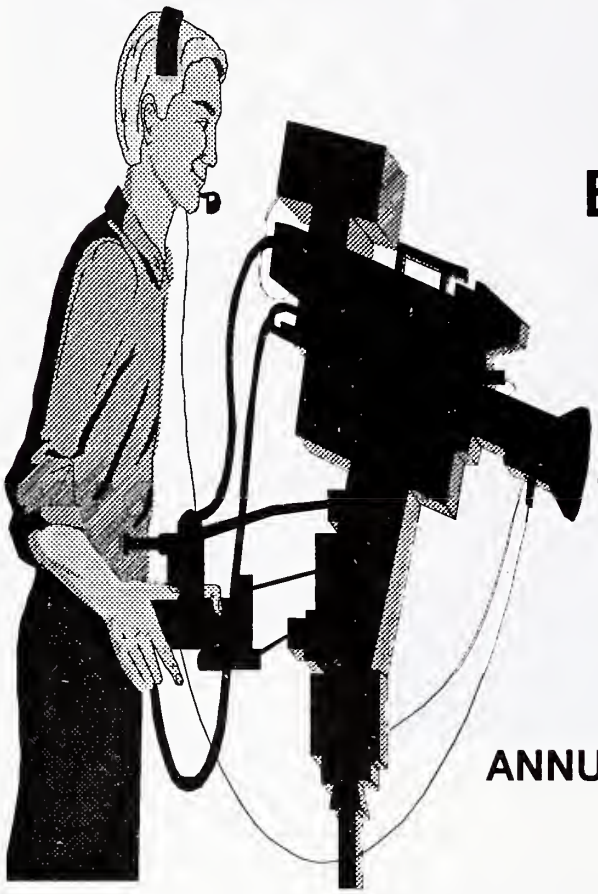
Garcia would like to see the organizations push for head counts and keep up constant pressure, much as news organizations including the Radio and Television News Directors Association have done. "Head counts have put serious pressure on news organizations for years," says Garcia, "and only in the last couple have newspapers said, 'This is how we're going to go about trying to bring more minorities into our staffs.' That's what the television industry needs." What's critical is who's at the table when staffs vet new show concepts, he concludes. The reason there is more of a presence, even a peripheral one, for gays and lesbians has to do with the fact gays and lesbians are part of the Hollywood culture. "Until blacks and Latinos become part of that . . . then everything has this kind of pop fad quality, like the music industry now saying, 'We need to find another Ricky Martin.' "

— JACQUELINE CONCIATORE

Jacqueline Conciatore [jconciatore@earthlink.net] is a freelance writer living in Washington, D.C.

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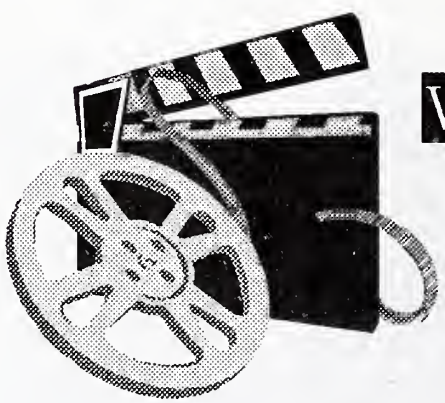
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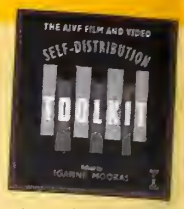
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Windy City filmmakers sign the lease for a new artist-run movie theater.

BY NADINE EKREK



(from left) Logan Kibens, Jason Tugman & John Glenn—part of the team behind Chicago's upcoming screening facility.

"IndiePlex will be a place not only where filmmakers can screen their films, but where you can come and screen your dailies, view rough cuts, and have private investor screenings."
—Jason Tugman, executive director of Chicago's Sleeping Girl Productions

SHOOTING A FILM IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD IS one thing. Showing it is another. The DIY ethos that has inspired countless directors has now prompted a group of Chicago filmmakers to take the means of exhibition into their own hands. Chicago's Sleeping Girl Productions, a filmmaker-run nonprofit organization, plans to open up an artist-owned movie theater this spring. Called IndiePlex, the venue will be devoted to four-walling independent films from the average Jo(sephine).

"People are making films just to make films," says writer/director Jason Tugman, 26, who is executive director of Sleeping Girl. "Why? Because they want to do it, and because they feel passionate about it. No matter how small an audience, there *is* an audience, whether it's mom or dad or whatever [and IndiePlex] is about allowing people a facility to show their work."

Here's how IndiePlex will operate: The filmmaker will pay a fee (probably around $400, although "that's on the high end of it," says Tugman) to rent out the theater for a weekend, typically for two-and-a-half hours per day. The filmmaker will determine the admission price and collect the entire box office at the end of the run; the house will collect only the rental fee and any money made on concessions. Feature films are the goal but Tugman and his crew are open to allowing two or three filmmakers to fill up the time slots with shorts, if necessary. According to Sleeping Girl's mission statement, two-thirds of the films screened will be by local filmmakers.

Sleeping Girl has secured a lease for the theater space at Damen and Grand Avenues,

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located just west of downtown Chicago's bustling Near North district. Tugman says the theater will have a flexible seating arrangement to accommodate between 100 and 250 patrons. He is funding approximately half of the start-up costs himself and expects to get the other half from corporate sponsorship. To attract financial support, Sleeping Girl has produced a CD-ROM entitled *Digital Idiots* that gives a virtual tour of IndiePlex. "It's basically an interactive business plan," says Tugman.

While other bars/film houses in Chicago have occasionally screened people's films, they have not been "supportive of the filmmaker," according to Tugman, but rather "money-making machines" that "took too big a cut from the box office."

"I think [IndiePlex] is a fabulous idea," says Liz Owen, one of the founders of FilmBureau606, a for-profit organization in Chicago dedicated to uniting the city's filmmaking community. "There are a lot of nontraditional venues to screen independent and ultra low-budget films here, but to open up something like this for local filmmakers that isn't going to cost you an arm and a leg is wonderful." FilmBureau606 currently holds quarterly screenings by six filmmakers called 6films/6buck$, whereby 10% of the box office goes to the screening venue donating the space and the remaining money is split 50/50 between FilmBureau606 and the six filmmakers.

Tugman's inspiration for IndiePlex comes from the theater world; he worked in storefront theater in Chicago for the last four years, mostly as a production manager. (His resumé includes gigs at Chicago's Ivanhoe, Steppenwolf, and Royal George theaters.) "I saw how many small, passionate companies were renting out spaces to put up their shows and thought the same theory could apply to film."

In addition to being a fully functional movie house, IndiePlex will also provide postproduction facilities and educational opportunities on industry standard, nonlinear systems, such as the Media 100 Tugman plans to buy. As he explains, "IndiePlex will be a place not only where filmmakers can screen their films, but where you can come and screen your dailies, view rough cuts, and have private investor screenings." Indie filmmakers will be allowed to book editing time, as well as rent digital and 16mm camera and lighting packages, at a fraction of the cost of what other post houses charge. Additionally, classes will be taught by experts on the latest postproduction software.

"I think it's a great idea, and I know other

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organizations would support it," says Ron Ver Kuilen, managing director of the Illinois Film Office. While Ver Kuilin is supportive of IndiePlex, he is a bit skeptical of its nonprofit status. "Money that is collected for not-for-profits is scrutinized pretty hard by the tax man," he says. "It's very difficult to mix for-profit enterprises in a not-for-profit zone. I'm not exactly sure how they're going to work that, but there are ways of doing it. Say they rent out $100,000 in post time, for example. They could still pay their taxes and have $72,000 left over and donate it back into the not-for-profit theater."

Tugman is confident his similar experiences with storefront theater will carry him through. "We took a very long, hard look at what we're doing, and everything that Sleeping Girl wants to do is well within our reach."

IndiePlex can be reached at (773) 472-0525; www.indieplex.org; www.digitalidiots.com

Nadine Ekrek is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

SHORT ENDS

MORE GOOD NEWS FOR DOCUMENTARY MAKERS, and an indication that the Academy for Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is giving more weight to the field of nonfiction filmmaking. In October the Academy announced a change in the selection procedures for feature documentaries in an effort to bring more nonfiction expertise earlier into the decision-making process. A committee of 50 documentarians (instead of a committee composed of members of all the crafts areas) will now view all Oscar-eligible entries and make a semi-finalist list of12. This dozen will then be voted on by all local members of the Academy at screenings in NY, LA and SF to select the five finalists. For more details, see www.oscars.org

—PAUL POWER

ERRATA

IN THE PROFILES SECTION OF THE NOVEMBER issue, Steve Lawrence was wrongly identified as coordinating producer for the *Vis a Vis* series. He is the series producer as well as one of the directors of the programs. In addition, it was wrongly reported that PBS has commissioned six new programs for 2000/2001 when this is not the case. CPB has given a grant in support of two new programs and the rest are in development. Also in November's issue, we incorrectly identified the late Sonny Bono as a senator. Bono in fact was a member of Congress from Southern California's 44th district.

The Independent apologizes for these errors.

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4 Templates for the Future

A choice of models for online viewing.

BY ROB ROWND



From *Momma Triptych* on www.newvenue.com

WHILE CABLE IS EXPANDING NICHE MARKETS FOR innovative fare on television, it's still following the old broadcast model: programming flows outward from a single source to multiple viewers during fixed time slots. Meanwhile on the web, the Internet's random access structure has changed that equation. Viewers are no longer locked into a set broadcast time and duration. Surfing the web for film content is more like browsing at a video store, and picking a file to stream or download is like popping that video into the home VCR. The viewer initiates and controls the order, length, and duration of the viewing experience. All of this makes the net one huge Blockbuster Video store—without the censorship and florescent lighting.

However, the Internet is much more than that, in both positive and negative ways. On the plus side, it is so open, so limitless, and so potentially cost-effective as a means of distribution that the current distribution bottleneck independents face should go by the wayside in the next five years. On the down side, the Net is so open, so limitless, and so resistant to organization that the burden will shift to audiences' shoulders as they struggle to slog through all the available content.

Just how film and video is distributed and seen on the web is evolving at a daily pace. Today there are a number of different models, both like and unlike the Blockbuster template. The short survey that follows ignores the large-budget corporate ventures that are grabbing headlines, such as www.broadcast.com, www.livetv.com, and www.den.com [see "Move over NBC, Heeere's DEN," in the June 1999 *Independent*]. Instead, we'll focus on four smaller ventures that are either actively seeking content from independents, producing it themselves, or linking mediamakers with potential audiences.

This type of venture is so new that business research/consulting firms like Arthur Andersen, Organic Online, and Forresters admit there is not enough empirical evidence to do any sort of quantitative study of current opportunities. That said, these specific examples demonstrate the ways in which this new medium is organizing itself. Some sites are commissioning or programming work created specifically for the web; some look for existing work, offering it a new home; still others act only as a nexus. The following four entities were selected not only because of the quality of their products, but also because of the intelligence, focus, and clarity of the people and plans behind them.

The Superstore

www.undergroundfilm.com

Former *Entertainment Weekly* writer Adrian Glover and partners have opened a site dedicated solely to our favorite niche, independent film. Undergroundfilm.com administers one of the best-looking, most intelligently laid out Beta test sites anywhere. In October, this coverage expanded to a 65-screen site dedicated to covering every single facet of making films outside the studio system.

This commercial site proposes to be the most inclusive thing out there. Sections include: screenplays; financing; profiles of established, up and coming, and wannabe independents; gossip about everything; crew lists; and, of course, downloadable shorts and even feature-length films. There will be discussion groups for every movie available on the site, and viewer comments can be automatically forwarded to the filmmaker's email. UGF also provides the option of self-distribution from the site, offering a 25/75 split with the filmmaker for all VHS cassettes sales, with nonexclusive rights.

In terms of content, UGF considers itself to be an open forum with limits. There are no constraints on file size or length as long as the work remains near the commercially acceptable span of a feature or less. There is an erotica section, but they will not accept pornography. There is a documentary section, but they will not accept any investigative journalism (due to unresolved legal questions about libel and the Internet). [For other sites following this acqusi-

tion model, see "The Point of No Return," in the Aug/Sept. 99 *Independent*.]

The Niche Series

contact newcaspict@aol.com

Coming from a background in reality-based television, including *American Bounty Hunter*, NewCastle Picture's Scott Paterra views webcasting with a very pragmatic eye. His approach: focus on giving people what they'll pay to see. Paterra is preparing to launch a Beta test site of series-on-demand in early 2000 with a burst of episodic programming that's aimed at Gen X and Gen Y viewers. Currently in the works are several series celebrating the adrenaline-fueled joy of extreme sports.

While they will produce some content themselves, the company primarily sees itself as a compiler of series created by outside producers. Geared toward various niche markets, this programming will ideally be so specific that it appears to be made by members of that community or sub-culture. The strength of this venue is that it will provide something that cannot be found on existing networks due to economies of scale.

To that end, NewCastle is looking for content that can be presented in 2-5 minute episodes which can be serialized around a common theme or topic. Currently they want to see completed work rather than be pitched concepts. These works can combine text, animation, audio, and live-action video or emphasize any one of those elements. The key to the sale is that the work has to hold its own in the short episodic format. Like everyone interviewed, Paterra understands that the integration of some form of interactivity is what will differentiate one site from another, but NewCastle is most interested in having new ideas about interactivity developed by its independent contractor content providers. In other words, they're looking to you, kid—come up with something compelling that breaks down into discrete chunks, and you might well make a deal.

Yet despite being slated as a for-profit venture, Paterra readily admits that nobody (including him) knows how to make money from the content of a web site. NewCastle is currently considering an intelligent PIN system that will store a credit or debit card number registered to your computer, and then bill your credit card when you click on a preview window to download or stream a program. But the model is still under review, as is the structure for paying media artists. For now, Paterra plans to work that out on a case-by-case basis.

The Art Video Gallery

www.newvenue.com

With time spent as an office PA for Woody Allen and as a commercial web designer, newvenue's Jason Wishnow has both a quirky sense of humor and some definite ideas about how to present video content on the web. Newvenue presents only work originated for the web; it does not show repurposed content intended for television or cinema. Some of its best content was commissioned specifically for the site—for example, Shenly Glen's *Momma Triptych*. Wishnow encourages filmmakers to use the limitations of the web and think of them as new genre constraints; this will help them make programs that



www.undergroundfilm.com

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really work when presented in this new medium—which has as many quirks as film and video.

The site has an excellent technical section devoted to digital filmmaking for webcast, which covers the basics of compression, frame rates, and software tools. The respect for this new craft and comfort level with its tools are obvious from the creative choices made in some of the pieces found on Newvenue. Some very subtle and striking stuff is at work here—using Quicktime and MM Flash within the same movie to get two different looks, slight changes in conventional camera work to make that tiny frame work to your advantage, and multiple screens to present different points of view.

As the site is currently supported through grants and Wishnow's own largesse, Newvenue offers exposure but not compensation. Set up as a nonprofit to display the best motion content for the web, Wishnow hopes eventually to attract corporate sponsorship. With that in place, he'd like to begin awarding prize money and continuing to commission work, but for now his goal is to provide filmmakers with an audience.

The Vegetal Model

www.rhizome.org

With a name taken from botany filtered through contemporary French critical theory, Rhizome is the sole entry in this survey that isn't trying to resemble a manmade thing. Like the horizontal root that gives Rhizome its name, the site lacks a center. Instead it exists as a many-to-many communications web, where the most interesting and interested members of the community drive the discussion threads.

Though it's been around the longest (founded in 1996), Rhizome hasn't developed into an on-line gallery or a host site. Instead it remains a simple email listserve and a stunning linking graphic interface whose subscribers direct fellow readers to new web-based work they've set up on servers elsewhere.

There is as much good thinking and writing on Rhizome as there are links to good web art. Currently 3,000 email subscribers to the weekly Rhizome digest bump heads and connect to interesting web-based art, including but not limited to video and motion graphics. Which just goes to show that the best things on the web aren't necessarily created with the biggest budgets. That's something that should sound familiar to independent filmmakers.

Rob Round is a contributing editor of The Independent.

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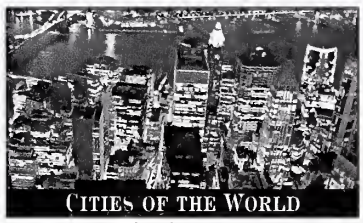
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Site Seeing

BY LISA VASTA

www.Directorunknown.com

DIRECTORUNKNOWN.COM IS A NEW FILM EXPERIment run by six Los Angeles-based filmmakers who last year decided to create a 12-episode Movie of the Web. Each person directed two episodes using the other five colleagues to act as crew. They met once a month to film, edit, and put the episodes online, each of which was between three and seven minutes long.



This time around the process stays the same, but the concept has changed. Gone is the miniseries; this is the year of the short film. Each monthly short will be self sufficent, but united by theme. So stay tuned for a half dozen elaborations on "Cash Withdrawal."

www.scriptseeker.com

AT FIRST GLANCE, SCRIPTSEEKER.COM APPEARS to be a comprehensive catalog of new scripts available to any registered member of the site. But look closer, and you'll see it's more. The site is also a great reference for anyone interested in screenwriting or playwriting. For writers wanting to getting their work out, the site charges $10 a month to exhibit scripts for one year. If sold, the writer receives every penny of the sale. There's also a Call for Entries board listing contests hosted by production companies looking for new material. For $99.95 ($79.95 if registered) you can also hand over your script for in-depth analysis.

Among the site's notable resources are Script Tips, which offers help in dialogue and plot construction, and interviews with writers in the business. The site also has links to other companies that are seeking new scripts.

www.directorsnet.com

DIRECTORSNET.COM IS MAINLY A LINKS SITE. All members have web sites of their own which are linked to the main page. Here you'll find varied information on new filmmakers, as well as the skinny on more established directors. If you're a member you can access the site's employment listings and bulletin boards. The site also has a well-stocked festivals listing section.

The industry links page, however, is the one that filmmakers will be most interested in. The Film Archives & Directories links include, among other sites, FaTCaT, a recently launched Internet directory promoting British Film and Television Craft and Technology, and a Soundtrack Database. TV & Cable lists everything from new and classic film channels, to news and music networks, to miscellaneous material such as sports and weather, and also includes links to foreign networks. The Producers & Distributors links also run the gamut, from TV outlets, such as Bravo and King World, to major independents like Miramax and Sony Picture Classics, to low-budget outfits like Troma. Miscellaneous links include many state film offices, casting companies, and tech supply sites—in short, all the preliminary info a filmmaker needs to help get a project off the ground.

Lisa Vasta is an editorial intern at The Independent *and a freelance writer.*

WWW.AIVF.ORG

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Filmmaker Says, "Ciao," to Sagging Sales
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ECLECTIC CO.

The Montréal Festival of New Cinema

BY JERRY WHITE



The entranceway to Ex-Centris, site of Montréal's Nouveau Cinéma fest.

1999 REPRESENTED SOMETHING OF A REBIRTH FOR Montréal's Festival International du Nouveau Cinéma et Nouveax Médias. After years of financial and organizational difficulties, the festival has moved into the huge new media complex now known as Ex-Centris, located in the heart of Montréal's chic nightlife district.



Pedro Almodovar's *All About My Mother* was one of the bigger guns at Montréal this year.

This architecturally ambitious building is the product of a collaboration between local software tycoon Daniel Langlois and Claude Chamberlain, the festival's director, co-founder, and director of the arthouse known as the Parallele. This multi-million dollar facility is intended to support research and development of new media projects, in addition to promoting international "auteur" cinema, independent and avant-garde film, and new work from Canada and Québec. [see the March 1999 *Independent*]

This is not a bad summary of the festival itself, a unique event that is too little known in American independent circles. Chamberlain and his associates Luc Bourdon (shorts programmer) and Alain Mongeau (new media programmer) create a line-up for their October event that combines the worlds of cybernetic experimentation, feature films from all over the world, and short films and videos that range from the straightforwardly narrative to the opaquely experimental. The festival is, in short, open to an extremely wide variety of moving image art, and Chamberlain is passionate about breaking down the conventional barriers that divide various schools. It's difficult to imagine a festival where Canadian Atom Egoyan would take part in an informal public discussion with the Armenian experimental filmmaker Artavazd Pelechian, who received a tribute this year for the dense, intensely lyrical shorts he began making in Eastern Europe's repressive 1960s. The two talked about documentary form, homeland/diaspora relations, and how cultural self-knowledge manifests itself cinematically. The friendly mixing of such disparate visions is something of a festival specialty.

Among the heavy hitters of world cinema on view were Abbas Kiarostami (*The Wind Will Carry Us*), Steven Soderbergh (*The Limey*), Jim Jarmusch (*Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*), and Pedro Almodovar (*All About My Mother*). Also on display were works less likely to find North American distribution, such as Alexandr Sokurov's creepy, masterful *Moloch*, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's *Sicilia!*, and Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Flowers of Shanghai*. Rounding out this feature program was a selection of first films and work by lesser-knowns that you'd be unlikely to see elsewhere. *Voyages*, by Emmanuel Finkiel, joined three stories of the Yiddish-speaking Jewish diaspora with carefully composed, brooding visuals. Finkiel's film is about the deep fragmentation that marks the contemporary Jewish experience and is especially notable for a sequence in Israel that refuses to indulge in any romanticism about such fragmentation ever being resolved. Flemish filmmaker Patrice Toye brought her first film, *Rosie*, a harsh tale of a troubled young girl who, along with her mother and "uncle," is about to slip through the cracks of Belgian society. This was a simple story, straightforwardly told, eschewing the feel of faux-documentary naturalism that plagues a great deal of American independent work. Much the same could be said for an exceptional American independent feature called *Sue*, by Amos Kollek. The festival jury decided to give a special award to Anna Thomson for her moving performance in this drama about a woman slipping deeper and deeper into urban alienation.

Equally important to the proceedings were the short films and videos, which were, like the features, created by a combination of the unknown and the renowned. The Artavazd Pelechian tribute was certainly the highlight, although there was a great deal of high-quality short work shot on a variety of formats (literally everything from 1/2" to digital video to 35mm). Acclaimed experimentalist Matthias Mueller sent his new short *Vacancy*, a found-footage portrait of Brasilia drenched in bright colors. American videomaker William E. Jones also drew on found footage; his 20-minute video *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* was an eerie, haunting document of how even the production of porn has moved to places where the workforce is cheaper and

more desperate, Eastern Europe in this case. Jem Cohen's new film *Amber City* was also on display, a dreamy, lush portrait of a Europe in transition. It played on the same program as two episodes of a Brazilian series called *Travelling Along the Border*. Formally very different from Cohen's more aestheticized vision, these also dealt with issues surrounding modernity and the ambiguities of national culture. The Loup Argent award, given for Best Short Film, went to the late Senegalese master Djibril Diop Mambety's last film, *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil.*

The program most clearly of interest to independent filmmakers was a pitch workshop, sponsored by the Québec funding agency Société de Dévelopement des Enterprises Culturelles (SODEC) as part of its celebration of the 10th anniversary of their program to aid young filmmakers. It featured a series of frantic pitches in both French and English for short films, which were critiqued by some of the bigwigs in Canadian independent film. Short film programmers from both the French and English departments of the Canadian Broadcast Company (CBC) took part, although embarrassingly, Tara Fitzgerald, the English-language CBC representative, was the only person on stage who couldn't speak both of Canada's official languages. This led to a quick scramble for a translator when it was made clear to her that she could not reasonably expect to take part in a panel in Montréal speaking and understanding only English. Judy Gladstone, who runs Bravo's highly successful FACT program, which provides production funding for a wide variety of shorts, also took part. The proposals were mostly for overly-ambitious narrative films, and the panelists, while always tactful, often found themselves trying to impress upon the prospective short filmmakers the limitations of the form. Despite these predictable shortcomings, the event offered a fascinating peek into the nuts and bolts of Québec's much-praised cinematic infrastructure.

Montréal's Festival of New Cinema and New Media, then, is a real crossroads that makes the most of Québec's artistic vitality. There's no festival quite like it; video and computer experiments, Peter Greenaway and unknown U.S. independents, first-time Flemish filmmakers and recently departed African masters all come together in a context that constantly draws attention to the ways they are related. For independents of any stripe, the Festival of New Cinema deserves a close look.

Jerry White is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, where he also teaches Film Studies.



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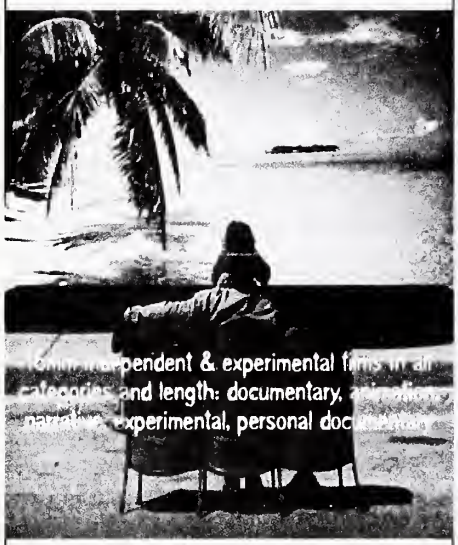
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FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

AUSTIN'S POWERFUL SHORTS

Cinematexas says, "Yeah, baby, yeah!"

Peter Tscherkassky's *Outerspace* was an audience & jury favorite at Austin.

BY HOLLY WILLIS

SUDDENLY EVERYBODY IS EXUBERANTLY CELEbrating the short film format, but Rachel Tsangari and Bryan Poyser were doing it several years before it was cool when they founded Cinematexas. Based in Austin at the University of Texas, the five-day festival, held in September, quickly established itself as an excellent venue for some of the best shorts around, mainly because Tsangari, Poyser, and co-programmer Jen Proctor are adamantly disinterested in the mundane calling-card narrative or parody shorts; they prefer work that really pushes the boundaries. You know you're going to find not one but several gems here.

And this was certainly the case this year. While the festival itself was plagued by numerous inexplicably horrible projection gaffes, there were several outstanding shorts making their premieres. The highlight has to be audience and jury favorite *Outerspace*, Peter Tscherkassky's extraordinary demolition of a piece of footage from a horror film. While Tscherkassky's overall project is similar to that of filmmaker Martin Arnold in that he seems to deconstruct a scene by rocking back and forth through it frame by frame, Tscherkassky's intent is not to analyze the implications of minute gestures but rather to study cinema as an apparatus. Where Arnold moves inward and uncovers things, Tscherkassky pulls backwards; this happens literally in the film as the camera retreats through a window and back far enough to show the edges of the frame before its ecstatic explosion, which demolishes not only the image, but a genre and cinema itself. It's the best film I've seen in a long time—and that's what Cinematexas is about!

Other favorites include Jem Cohen's *Amber City*, a meditative study of a city in Italy. With its delicately somber tones and meandering pace, the film not only underscores Cohen's complete self-assurance as a filmmaker who knows his art, but it reminds us that fast, cheap, and out of control are not the only components for a contemporary aesthetic.

While these projects resonate very deeply, there were several films that were just damn quirky. Deborah Strutt's *My Cunt* fits here—it's an odd yet amusing discussion of the proper role of the cunt—as does the wonderfully perverse animation by Jim Trainor titled *The Bats*, which details the pragmatic life cycle of these elaborately sexual flying creatures. Drawn with black felt-tip marker on paper, the film would be quite striking just in terms of its stark, sinuous aesthetic; however, the incredibly weird and yet perfect voiceover flips the film upward into a realm all its own. (Given that one of the tourist events in Austin is going to a bridge spanning the Colorado River at sunset to watch the millions of bats, the film had an appropriate home in this city.)

The other great thing about Cinematexas is the easy melding of pleasures. There's always good company—participating filmmakers seen around town (and at every party) included Cauleen Smith, Jay Rosenblatt, and Michael Snow—many parties, and an array of sumptuous activities, not the least of which is swimming at Barton Springs, where the brisk, clear water rejuvenates the most exhausted filmgoer.

But all of that may change. At a tearful closing night ceremony, Tsangari, Poyser, and Proctor explained that they're moving on to other projects, which seems to leave Cinematexas in limbo. Given that so much of the festival came out of their collective love for film and an intuitively genius programming sensibility, it's difficult to imagine Cinematexas without them.

Holly Willis is senior editor at IFILM [www.ifilm.net] and a freelance writer covering independent film, video, and new media.

GRIST FOR THE MILL

All media forms flourish at the Mill Valley Film Festival

BY BRENDAN PETERSON

IT WAS A WARM OCTOBER NIGHT. THE SUN-drenched streets of majestic Mill Valley, California, were filled with more beautiful people than usual. Women in silky gowns and men in slick black suits overflowed the sidewalks, sipping Chardonnay and checking each other out. Soon this chic, chatty crowd would be sitting quietly in the dark at one of the Mill Valley Film Festival's opening night flicks.

Running October 7–17, the 22nd annual Mill Valley Film Festival covered a lot of ground. From the country roads of Iran to the city streets of San Francisco, Mill Valley's multi-colored mixture of American independent and world cinema represented a clear contemporary snapshot of films that, in most cases, won't play at the local multiplex. And unlike other high-profile festivals, Mill Valley shuns programming themes, festival awards, and bidding wars.

"Mill Valley is very much a filmmakers' festival," says festival programmer Zoe Elton. "Its intimate ambiance makes it a place where professional connections thrive without outside pressures. This year we instigated the Official Premieres Selection, which gave more prominence to feature premieres. We've found that Mill Valley is often the fall festival of choice as a launching pad for both American and international independents, so, as a noncompetitive festival, we're using this as a way to increase the profile of premieres at the festival."

Director Ang Lee unveiled his latest on opening night, the bloody, engaging Civil War epic *Ride with the Devil*, at the newly renovated Sequoia Twin Theater in downtown Mill Valley. Afterwards the well-scrubbed crowd schmoozed at a gala party with other opening night festival-goers who had seen either Patricia Rozema's Jane Austen adaptation *Mansfield Park*, or Sydney Pollack's latest, *Random Hearts*. Luckily, anti-social film lovers had plenty of other opportunities to see movies and avoid the glitz and glamour. Over its 10-day span, the festival screened 220 films and videos for almost 40,000 people.

Although Mill Valley regulars tend to turn out for the festival's prime selection of international films, this year many of the most accessible and independently minded films came from just across the Golden Gate Bridge. The streets and studio apartments of San Francisco's Castro District come alive in Nick Katsapetses' engagingly honest gabfest, *The Joys of Smoking*. Shot with low-budget inventiveness, this hip, amusing take on contemporary love combines first-person confessionals with vivid vignettes to capture a documentary-like perspective on the everyday drama of relationships. Director/writer/editor Christopher Brown's narrative feature *Metal* is a stunning black-and-white film about an unemployed mechanic's struggles to make ends meet for his wife and children. Shot entirely on location in San Francisco's Hunter's Point district, *Metal* captures the raw rhythms and realities of this area in a personal and poetic way.

In addition to a healthy selection of film, the festival includes a NewMedia/Videofest sidebar. "The Videofest serves as a sort of thermometer for changes in media technology," says Elton. "It's never quite the same from one year to the next. We've always used this as a place to explore both the fine-art end of video and new media, as well as being the place where the intersections of film and video are examined."

Although cinema connoisseurs might not consider Keith Broder's video documentary *Sex Death and Eyeliner* fine art, it sure is fun. This fascinating work delves underground into a world of gothic sub-culture. Interviews with a colorful assortment of men and women exposes the personal stories behind this community of societal "outcasts" whose passion for everything from body piercing to blood play has brought them together.

Another Videofest highlight was a screening and discussion of the short-lived Comedy Central sitcom *Frank Leaves for the Orient*. After showing a few episodes, director John Sanborn and writer Michael Kaplan candidly related their experience with network executives whose constant suggestions included everything from dramatic dialogue re-writes to the shaving of a character's facial hair. The show's laugh-out-loud combination of live action comedy and cutting-edge animation, which included anywhere from 30-60 visual effects per episode created on Sanborn's desktop computer, clearly represented the technological potential of television today.

In addition to celebrating contemporary achievements in media technology, the Videofest honored the late comedian Ernie Kovac, a pioneer in the field of real time inter-



[clockwise from above]: Mani Kongo, King of the Bakongo, from Mweze Ngangura's *I.D. Pieces di Identities*.

Late comedian and real time interactive TV advocate Ernie Kovac was the subject of a festival tribute, hosted by his wife Edie Adams.

Go gothic with Keith Broder's *Sex Death and Eyeliner*.







active television. Kovac's wife and creative partner, Edie Adams, spoke to the sold out auditorium and presented a sampling of video clips highlighting the scope of Kovac's progressive work.

The festival's New Media section, represented by five Macintosh computers in a windowless room, was less inspiring. However, despite the New Media's basement-apartment ambiance, a few of the featured installations proved engaging. Paula Levine presented a web-based word game, *Blotto*, based on a popular 19th century parlor game. Takahiko Iamura's *Observer/ Observed* is an interactive exploration of the camera eye's relationship to the human eye. Most impressive was the late Christine Tamblyn's *Archival Quality*, a deeply personal and innovative CD-ROM that highlights her work as a performer and video artist and illustrates the potentially powerful connection that can exist between technology and the human spirit.

For those craving more human contact, the Mill Valley's seminar series connected folks with similar interests. In fact, Mill Valley's new mentor program offered people attending the festival's seminars a chance to discuss a project they are working on in a one-on-one meeting with a festival guest.

This year's seminar topics ranged from "Film and Spirituality" to "Scripting for the Digital Age." Droves of independent film aficionados turned out for "Strategies for Indies from Festivals to Marketing." The well-chosen panel of distributors, publicists, and filmmakers offered practical advice to the crowd. "The most important advice I can give you is to include good quality photos in your press kit," said Gary Meyer, a consultant and former exhibitor for Landmark theaters. Panelist Udy Epstein a filmmaker/distributor with Seventh Arts Releasing, warned the wide-eyed audience to be realistic. "It's important to remember that only two percent of the independent films produced in any given year get distribution." In addition, the panelists agreed that filmmakers should "put together their own marketing plan ahead of time to make the job easier for distributors and publicists." After a formal Q&A session, the eager audience stormed the stage for some up-close and personal time.

While not as glamorous as Cannes or as powerful as Sundance, the 1999 Mill Valley Film Festival was an easy going, straightforward affair brimming with artistic inspiration, practical insight, and more than a handful of cool flicks.

Brendan Peterson is a freelance critic and writer who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

LONDON CALLING

Limey hospitality at the Raindance Film Festival.

BY HOLLY HUDSON-GROVES

FROM SOHO IN LONDON'S WEST END, THE Raindance Film Festival kicked off its seventh and largest edition yet. Helmed by Canadian ex-patriot Eliot Grove, the festival anted up an ambitious slate of 73 features and 223 shorts from October 8 to 21.

"In 1993 there were only nine British feature films made [in the UK]. I decided that a lot of people would make movies if they had a place to show them, so I started Raindance," says Grove. One can feel the effects of Britain's film boom; this year approximately half the line-up hailed from the UK.

Early on Grove dubbed this event "The Raindance Film Showcase and Market," but later simplified the name. He shrugged off initial protests from the Sundance Film Festival and claims he chose the name because of "the dance people have to do to get their film made." But even though it's no longer officially called a market, Grove stresses that in actuality it is a "hybrid—a market for the industry, screenings for the public." Scheduled to coincide with London Screenings and one week before MIFED, Raindance aims to catch the run-off of buyers attending these major film markets. Judging from last year's festival, the plan seems to be working. "Of the 43 features screened, 23 secured distribution deals," according to Grove. "You'll see just about every international acquisitions executive here that you'd hope to see at Cannes or IFFM."

In addition to the home-grown product, this year's line-up included pics from Denmark, Australia, Greenland, and the United States, as well as sections devoted to new films from Yugoslavia and South Africa. *The Blair Witch Project* opened the festival with its British premiere and cast a tall shadow over the ensuing selections. Nevertheless, there were a few other stand-outs. *Rupert's Land* (Jonathan Tammuz, Canada) traced the reunion of two half brothers, one a British attorney and the other an out-of-work British Colombia fisherman, as they set out on a road trip to their maligned father's funeral. Another was *Karnaval*, the debut feature of French director Thomas Vincent. Set and filmed in the midst of Dunkirk's carnival, which is a colorful orgy of nightly drunkenness, the story involves a love triangle that examines questions of betrayal and responsibility.



Soho's Metro Theater, venue for London's Raindance Film Festival.

"Of the 43 features screened, 23 secured distribution deals," claims Grove. "You'll see just about every international acquisitions executive here that you'd hope to see at Cannes or IFFM."

Grove likes to showcase shorts, calling them "a laboratory of cinema," and says that buyers attending the festival watch them to assess their viability for airlines or British TV. While being screened is a blessing to any filmmaker, being seen is a necessary component of the equation—and one Raindance had trouble fulfilling. Many of the daily shorts programs were under-attended (in fact, even the features rarely boasted full houses). Perhaps a greater service could have been done by screening selected shorts before the features.

With legions of shorts to choose from, gems were easily found. These included *P1* (Seth Wiley, U.S.), in which a man is seduced by the female voice of the anti-theft system of a car he is stealing; *Snarl* (David White, UK), a surreal nightmare of a man caught in a traffic jam; and *Los Taxios* (Lars Damoiseaux, Belgium), in which out-of-towners seeking a tour of Brussels become captive of a manic cab driver intent on showing them the "real" city.

In between screenings Raindance sponsored the usual array of seminars geared toward making an independent filmmaker out of Jane the Civil Servant. A seminar on "Pitching for the Absolute and Utter Beginner," led by Grove himself, was entertaining, but offered some dubious advice on how to behave during a meeting with a potential buyer. Grove stressed the importance of flattery and encouraged hopeful deal-makers to find out and use personal information about buyers, including "their children's birthdays, if possible."

This year marked the festival's first two-week run, and the growth spurt had its downside, as organization was sorely lacking. Some invited producers traveled from Italy only to find their film was not listed in the program nor was it screening. Conversely, a filmmaker from the U.S. found out after the fact that her film was shown by the festival. There was a general lack of cohesion to the festivities, the result, in part, of the absence of identifying name tags or any way of separating filmmakers from the general public.

Despite an atmosphere that at times felt more like a hipster gallery opening than a festival, Raindance tried hard. With big ambitions and little funding, Grove has managed to put the festival on the map. He was grateful for Channel 4's contribution of a slew of "Raindance Brollys" (umbrellas) emblazoned with logos, which staffers handed out to buyers at the nearby hotels. One can only hope that Grove's tireless enthusiasm will iron out the wrinkles next year, and that he'll remember quality speaks louder than quantity.

Holly Hudson-Groves [hudsongroves@yahoo.com] is a freelance writer/producer from New York currently living in London.

PHOTO: HOLLY HUDSON-GROVES

Your Best Foot Forward

Lions Gate's Mark Urman talks about marketing your film to the industry.

BY LYNN M. ERMANN



Mark Urman, co-president of Lions Gate Releasing.

FACE IT, IT'S A BUYER'S MARKET. GONE ARE THE days—if they every truly existed—of movie execs frantically bidding on your film. Distributors can now go to a major festival like Sundance and pick and choose from a glut of fine features. Plus, the competition is becoming more savvy. Every other filmmaker seems to have impressive posters, 'connected' publicists, and 'buzz.' How then can you possibly make your film stand out? What's the best way to utilize a festival to market your film to acquisition reps still bleary-eyed from watching the last five?

Mark Urman, a former indie publicist, now heads up the distribution division at Lions Gate Releasing, whose recent releases include *Dogma*, *The Red Violin*, *Buffalo 66*, *The Pillow Book*, and *Gods and Monsters*. A festival veteran, Urman has the experience of both hustling and acquiring films and has some perspective on these questions. He recently shared his insights at an Independent Feature Film Market panel of marketing and in a follow-up interview with *The Independent*.

There are some 300 film festivals in the United States alone. How important are these to distributors?

They're very important for us; we build our lives around the film festival calendar. But some festivals are more important than others from an acquisition standpoint. Those are primarily—in no order of importance—Toronto, because they show so many films; Sundance, which is heavier on the American independents; and Cannes, which is more international and less American. Since Cannes also has a market attached, there's a very high incidence of all sorts of potentially interesting titles that aren't part of the festival but which are being shown for the first time there.

> "The history books are littered with cases of films that did not land distribution because they were overpriced. It's never about what a movie cost, it's only about what a movie can make."

The majority of film festivals are not so much acquisitions opportunities as they are presentation possibilities. A lot of regional festivals are better for films that already have distribution and are making their way into theaters; they afford an opportunity for word-of-mouth and for working press in a particular market, but they're not so much places you would set up shop and bring in a lot of staff.

Going to film festivals is a very expensive thing—housing a staff, buying all the passes and tickets, the airfare, the food; it can cost a company thousands and thousands of dollars. You have to consider that most of those companies really can only distribute 15 films a year maximum, and we go into every festival with enough line-up to last us several months. So you don't want to pick up films you can't do well by, and you don't want to overcrowd your slate or acquire products that compete with products you already have. So you need to pace yourself and pick your opportunities well.

How should filmmakers approach distributors?

We're most comfortable being approached by filmmakers who have actually researched things and indicated they know who we are, what our taste is, how we operate, what our lineup has been of late, what it is currently, and what the future holds for us. A well-informed approach is one that's apt to go over better than just some form letter. We frequently get mail and faxes before film festivals or markets from people who are proposing things that are just not Lions Gate Films. A lot of those letters go right into the garbage.

What's the best way to get a distributor's attention during a festival? Should filmmakers bring some sort of marketing ideas at this stage?

Filmmakers don't have to do very much to get our attention. If the film is programmed in a festival we're covering, we're probably going to check it out one way or another.

I find that sometimes filmmakers spend way too much time trying to do a distributor's job for them, before they even have a distributor. What we look for when we go to a festival or market and flirt with the possibility of acquiring a film is a model. If you have some cast with you or the director accompanies the film, or if you have a publicist attached to the film who advances those people's agendas, gets them interviews, gets you some sort of exposure—we sit there and say, 'Ah! This is somebody who the media is interested in.' So I think it's the filmmaker's responsibility to, at least at the preliminary stage, create that sort of model for a distributor: 'Here we are; we look good, we have an interesting story to tell.' We observe from a distance and say, 'Yes, we can replicate that and do that in X number of cities in America when we open the film.'

By the same token, you go to a festival, you have your publicist beat the bushes, get critics

PHOTO: JONATHAN LEVINE/COMMA LIAISON

to come see the film and instantly trade in the sort of gossip that can then be communicated to the likes of us: 'Oh, [*New York Times* critic] Janet Maslin stayed to the end and was laughing the whole time,' stuff like that. Because we need to know that, if we commit to the movie, that the media will support it.

So the process of marketing the film can begin at the very beginning. When I open a festival catalog before seeing a single film, that which is said about the film—which is frequently adapted from the press materials provided to the festival—can either intrigue me or bore me to tears. That single image that you see, there are certain stills you look at and say, 'Whoa! I want to see that movie!' I felt that way about the still in the Sundance catalog for *Blair Witch*. And that single image has stuck with the film for a very long time.

So, it is never a mistake, if you can afford it, to have some sort of publicity representation at the earliest possible stage, so that every written word attached to a film at the outset descriptively is controlled and tasty. And to have a photographer on board for at least some of the shoot, so that you have images that are clear and evocative. I think people would be surprised how inexpensively that can be done. And it's also an area that is most frequently overlooked.

Does it help to have a trailer?

Every once and a while you get a promo for a film festival that shows what the film looks like, its shooting style, etc. But there are promo reels and there are promo reels—things that are cut like trailers and could be all smoke and mirrors. You have no idea whether the film really plays like that or not.

Sometimes we're approached by filmmakers, and they sit us down and show us 20 minutes of assembled footage, where you'll get scenes that are actually representative of the shooting style, the editing style, the acting style, the production values. That can be very helpful and can be the basis on which a distributor starts a serious flirtation.

But more often than not, you need to see the whole movie, and nothing they tell you before or after is going to matter much. If it doesn't excite us and we in turn can't excite quite a few others, it has to stop right there.

How much price haggling should filmmakers engage in once distributors are interested?

I can see a movie, really respond to it, and think that at a certain price that it is exactly what we're looking for. But you would be surprised how quickly that film looks less attractive as soon as the price is several hundred thousand dollars higher.

I suppose filmmakers owe it to themselves to hold out for what think they can get—there are economic mandates and investors who need to be repaid—but the history books are littered with cases of films that did not land distribution because they were overpriced. It's never about what a movie cost, it's only about what a movie can make[for distributors], every film is worth only as much as you think you can earn back and then profit, and the profit has to pay for your time, your labor, and your slot on the release schedule. You always look to make your money back theatrically, and then you do the math. If the price becomes something that makes profit a real question mark, you're probably not supposed to be picking up that movie. It's so easy to walk away in an instance like that.

My partner and I have been doing this for nearly two years, and we have never, ever, ever been involved in a bidding war. There can be a lot of buzz for certain films, then nothing happens. The dust settles and reality gets restored. But that's one of the dangers of film festivals—they create an enormous inflation of expectations on the part of distributors as well as filmmakers. It takes just one highly publicized (and frequently fictional) sales figure for multiple millions of dollars to make everybody think that if they put on their down parka and take their film to Sundance, they're going to end up rich by next Saturday. It just doesn't work that way. Those sales are very few and far between.

Nine times out of 10, you go to a film festival and everybody's whipped into a frenzy.

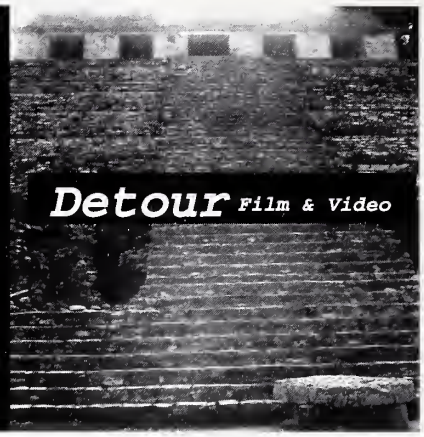
> "The process of marketing a film can begin at the very beginning. When I open a festival catalog, the description can either intrigue me or bore me to tears. There are certain stills you look at and say, 'Whoa! I want to see that movie!' "



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You're finally seeing films you haven't been allowed to see beforehand. You've had preliminary meetings, there's been flirtation, you've read the script, the cast is great, you're all set with your cell-phone, you know exactly where to reach the sales agent at the end of the movie. But, I swear to you, there's a high number of walk outs before the movie's over. We sneak out. Maybe somebody will pick it up, maybe somebody won't, but it's not for us. We don't like it, we don't believe in it, we don't think it's going to make money for anybody; certainly in our hands, it's not going to shine. It's very depressing—more so for the filmmakers, because they put all of their chips on one number, and it just very rarely works out.

Can filmmakers change your mind about a picture? How can a filmmaker follow up after the festival?

There have been some sad instances where filmmakers are surprisingly indefatigable in coming back to you again and again, and you're not interested. They ask you, "Did you see the movie?" "I want to talk to you about my movie." And there's nothing to talk about. If I'd have liked your movie, you would have heard.

But every once in a while, a change can occur, a change in the perception of the film. Sometimes it just takes time. You need some distance from the festival madness. Often [the film's] very touching, but you're tired, you've seen too much in too few days, you're looking at your watch, you're supposed to be in three other places.

If a film is potentially 'difficult' to distribute, will you be more likely to consider it if a filmmaker presents you with a marketing strategy?

I hear that a lot of what ultimately became a model for what Artisan did on *The Blair Witch Project* was in fact already in place with the filmmakers. [They had] a highly imaginative approach to capitalizing on the film's mystery and minimalism. So I could see a distributor not only responding to the movie, but to the ways to make it work. But you still have to implement it—and implement it in a national way, spend a good deal of money to have it really reach audiences—so you have to believe in it.

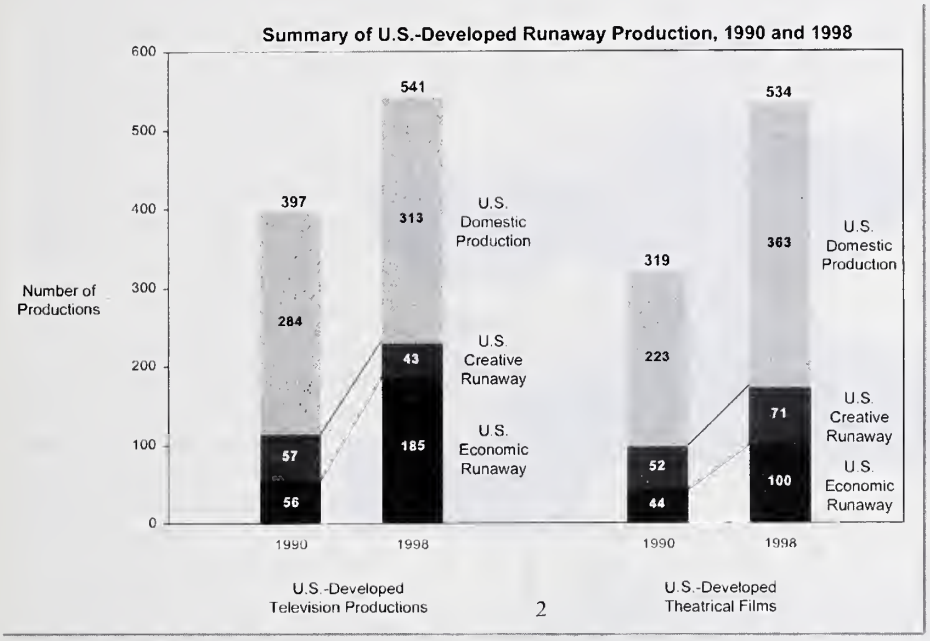
Every film is such hard work and something you have to live with for such a very long time, that you really need to *want* to get involved. It becomes a member of your family, and there are people you want to invite over and people you don't.

Lynn Ermann is a freelance writer in New York who has written for the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, New York Daily News, *and other publications.*

RECAPTURING RUNAWAY PRODUCTION

Why Canada has become a production magnet and what the U.S. is doing about it.

BY PETER WENTWORTH



READ IT AND WEEP: A report on Runaway Production commissioned by DGA/SAG shows an increase of 185% between 1990 and 1998 of U.S. film and TV productions shooting abroad.

"Whaddaya mean you're going to shoot your film in Canada? What have they got that we don't? Well, yes, the exchange rate works in their favor. Okay, so you don't have to sign a DGA contract, but that's only a few people. A 22 to 43 percent rebate against all Canadians employed on the production and another 10% for services? Ummmm, that's serious money. But what about the crews? I mean, can you find enough experienced . . . They shot how many *features in Toronto last year? I guess they do have a crew base. Yeah, well, so you can hire all your crew there, which saves on housing, travel, and per diem. The advantages of staying in the U.S.? I'm thinking . . . Give me a second . . . Say, could tell me someone I could talk to in Canada? I've got this project . . ."*

THE GROWING NUMBER OF U.S. PRODUCTIONS choosing to shoot in Canada has become a matter of national concern. A joint report commissioned by the Directors Guild of America (DGA) and the Screen Actor's Guild (SAG) titled "Runaway Productions" details with alarming bar graphs and terrifying pie charts the escalating number of films headed north to take advantage of the windfall of free money. Coupled with a meaningful support environment of skilled labor and facilities, Canada seems too good a bargain to pass up. The million dollar question (or $1,350,000 in Canadian dollars) is: what can we do about this?

That's what the U.S. Congress wanted to know when it scheduled a hearing in Charleston, South Carolina, on October 8, which unfortunately was postponed due to last-minute scheduling conflicts. But the debate will likely continue—so stay tuned. For those of you who haven't converted your dollars to Canadian currency and still want to shoot on native soil, help may be on the way. (So, too, for technical crew who won't be able to get Canadian work permits.) The upside of all this is that there are a number of new incentives and rebates at the Federal and State level that are pending or on the table.

Canadian Film Incentives

Canadian Film Incentives are something I've regularly revisited since the mid-1980s, when I was looking for any assistance I could find to help get my first film financed. I knew there was government money for production in Canada, but the eligibility requirements were complex. Projects had to achieve six to 10 points, earned by having a Canadian lead actor or two; a Canadian director; a Canadian producer; a Canadian screenplay (two points each); and some coveted below-the-line positions: art director, editor, and director of photography. It was an exceedingly difficult formula to meet if you were an American producer.

The Canadian government's film incentives might best be described as cultural protectionism. Projects had to have sufficient Canadian content, which was felt necessary to preserve Canada's cultural identity. One can see how this was a worthy issue when 90 percent of their population is within 100 miles of the American border. Though the Canadian Film Board was founded after WW II, it found its rallying cry in the 1950s with the pervasive threat of American television. More recently, Telefilm Canada was created for a slightly different purpose. In addition to funding on the basis of content, it was also meant to benefit Canada's film and television economy. Since Telefilm Canada's policy was to provide 50% percent of funding, Canadian producers were then left to find the balance. The United States was a natural for co-production money: we speak the same language and, like it or not, have similar cultures. Gradually, as requirements for content lessened, one thing remained a constant and a minimum requirement: the film had to be shot in Canada.

Specific Incentives

In 1994 the Canadian Government created a new kind of grant to assist in the funding of Canadian projects. Producers were offered a federal rebate of 11% against all Canadians employed on a film shot within its borders. Again, although the intent was to promote Canadian filmmaking, it also opened the door to American co-producers who could bring revenue into the country. Over the next few years the separate provinces created their own rebate programs to match that of the federal government. When combined, the total rebate for filming in Canada is 22 percent against all Canadians on the payroll (half provincial, half national). What's more, the competition for film revenue has heated up between the

PREPARED BY THE MONITOR COMPANY FOR SAG/DGA.

provinces, leading to Manitoba's passage of a whopping 33 percent rebate, which when combined with the federal government's 11 percent provides a 44 percent rebate for all Manitoba residents employed on a feature film shot Manitoba.

While the U.S. press has focused on the Canadian package (exchange rate, labor costs, and rebates) as the cause of runaway production, the most significant growth in Canadian runaways has occurred since the passage of the employment rebates in 1994. Prior to that, the exchange rate and labor rate advantages were a small incentive to most American producers, as Canada's film infrastructure (crews and equipment) was felt to be insufficient to handle the demands of Hollywood. Thus, what could be saved wasn't worth the risk of using unproved Canadian crews and facilities.



From Nick Searcy's *Paradise Falls*, shot in North Carolina using state tax incentives.

The labor rebates created a very meaningful incentive for American producers to throw caution to the wind and hire the less experienced Canadian crews. For producers with return business, the benefits grew as the crews became more experienced; what's more, they discovered their investments in Canadian facilities could also be eligible for additional tax breaks. Thus the change in Canada's funding orientation—from culture to infrastructure development—has yielded the largest pool of skilled labor and facilities outside of L.A. and New York. And it's one that works for less, at the end of the day leaving American producers with a six or seven-digit rebate as a parting gift.

The U.S. Feds' Response

The phenomenon of runaway production is not new. In the sixties and into the seventies, runaway production was a significant enough issue to warrant the passage of several measures to keep Hollywood filming in Hollywood. The 1971 Revenue Act allowed a tax credit to American companies that produced their films in America. This, coupled with the "Porn and Corn" tax credits, created a pool of new funds for many small independent film companies. (The nickname "Porn and Corn" obviously came from its detractors and reflects the fact that these tax shelters, which provided a 100 percent rebate to investors in motion pictures, led to fiscal abuse. There was also a political backlash when it was realized that it was funding X-rated movies.) The abuse of these tax shelters led to their abolition in 1976.

Washington does not want history to repeat itself. So while it is beginning to pass measures to address the problem of runaway production, these are less generous than earlier. A recent measure in Congress proposed a 20 percent tax break on the first $20,000 earned by production staff; this met resistance, however, based on the fear that, once again, American tax-payers might find themselves footing the bill for pornography. Despite lobbying from the DGA and SAG, House Ways and Means chairman Bill Archer (R-Tex) recently nixed the bill. In general, political support for the motion picture industry is delicate nowadays, both in light of the recent outcry against violence in the media and given the simple fact that both houses of Congress are controlled by the Republicans, who view the motion picture industry as the domain of liberal Democrats.

There is discussion between film industry advocates and the Department of Commerce to throw the NAFTA and GATT trade agreements on the table, if need be. GATT's and NAFTA's special protection of motion pictures could become a bargaining chip as the United States faces for the first time a serious threat to its dominance in the production of movies. Canada has been allowed some trade protectionism under the argument that motion picture trade must be isolated because of its significant cultural role. If film is treated like any other commodity, the argument goes, then American studios would flood the worldwide market and make it all but impossible for indigenous cultural production to survive. In Canada, such protectionism exists primarily in television, where Canadian content is given special consideration.

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On the State Level

For most states, the recruitment of the motion picture industry is handled under the auspices of economic development, as the revenue generated is viewed as business recruitment. Expenditures for labor, facilities, housing, and non-durables all add up.

In the past year, fueled by the SAG/DGA report, the newly created consortium of State Film Commissions has banded together to address the common enemy of Canada. Many individual states are beginning to offer incentives to help draw the film industry. Given the temporary nature of the business, these incentives are far less generous than those for other types of industries. Nonetheless, if you are planning a shoot of any size, always consult your State Film Commission to find out what incentives they might have or are in the process of formulating and whether your production is eligible.

Sales Tax Rebates

The most prominent incentive is the sales tax rebate, where productions apply beforehand and receive a voucher. The production accountants typically supply their major vendors with this voucher, saving on state sales tax, which can run anywhere from 4 to 8 percent.

Hotel Room/ Residency Rebates

A second common incentive is a waiver on non-residency tax. Most hotels charge an additional 6 to 10 percent for a state-levied residency tax. This is a tax that is charged for short-term guests. However, in some states if a room is booked in excess of a certain number of days, one can apply for a rebate against this tax. The typical cut-off is 30 days; thus on a four-week shoot, a production is right at the cusp of eligibility for this rebate—which adds up. For instance:

Room rate: $50 per night
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San José provides a waiver on residency taxes after 30 days. In South Carolina, you gotta turn on the lights at Motel 6 for 90 days before you get this money.

Investor Tax Credits

The following are some examples of state incentive programs. Be forewarned, some require significant math skills!

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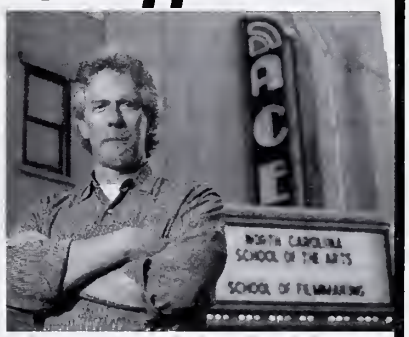
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North Carolina

North Carolina provides a state income tax rebate of 33 percent of one's total investment in designated North Carolina Small Businesses. And just as North Carolina-based film companies are eligible for this tax rebate, so too are investors in the company. The maximum tax credit an investor may claim is $15,000. However, the state allows a total of $5 million in total tax credits per year through this program.

South Carolina

South Carolina passed Bill 5060 last year, which provides a state tax credit for all individuals who invest in a qualified motion picture project. The requirements include shooting 20 percent of the film in the state and spending 2.5 times the total revenues from South Carolina investors in the state.

Let's say one is making a $1 million film. SC investors can each invest up to $45,000 and receive a tax credit of $15,000 against what they owe the state. However, the total amount of money eligible for the credit is $400,000 (2.5 x $400,000 = $1,000,000). Thus, you can raise part of your money in South Carolina, but you've also got to pull in outside investors for the balance. This type of legislation is typical, in that it allows the state to benefit also.

Rebates & Co-financing

Minnesota rebates 5 percent of all costs incurred within the state up to $100,000. Simply stated, all Minnesota residents, services, and goods used are eligible for a state rebate, with a total rebate of no more than $100,000.

As one would expect from Texas, their incentive is big—but unfortunately, it takes an equally large entity to utilize this program. Texas will put up 50 percent of the film's budget, but it requires a completion bond, a proven track record, and a piece of the action—and a guarantee that the film will go into profit. It sounds impressive, but the resounding question among those who have kicked this incentive around is, 'Has anybody made it work yet?

The DGA/SAG report "Runaway Productions" can be downloaded from [www.dga.org/press/releases/1999/runaway.pdf]. Check out AIVF's website [www.aivf.org] or the Association of Film Commissioners International's web site [www.afci.org] for information on over 250 film commisions and liaisons worldwide.

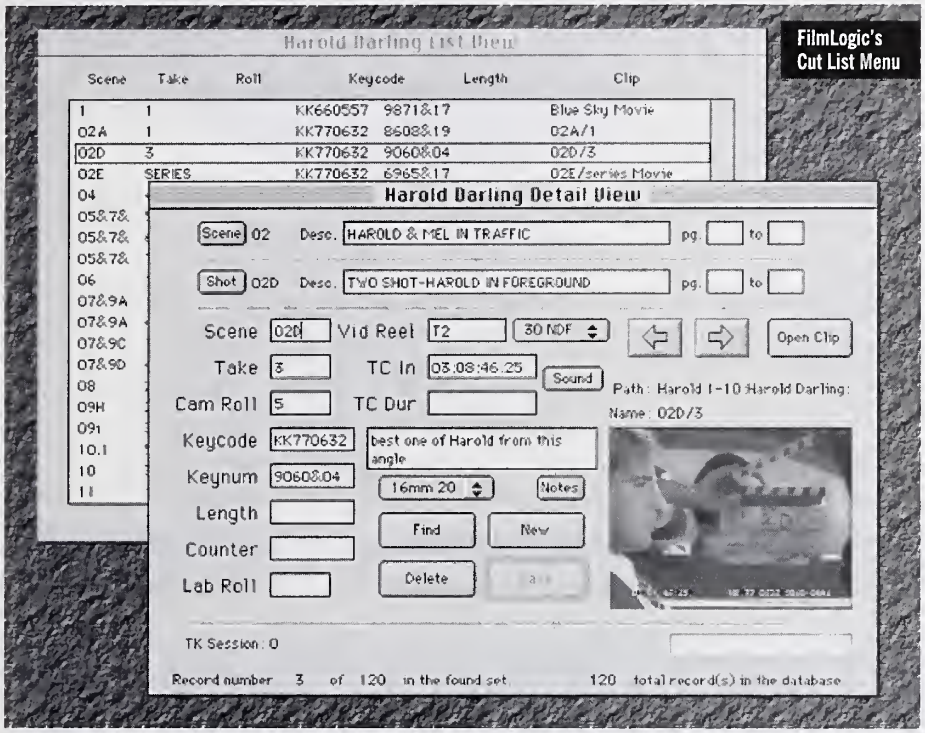
Peter Wentworth is an independent producer living in North Carolina.

NEW TECH

Number Cruncher

Getting cut-rate cut lists through the FilmLogic database.

BY ZED SAEED



DIGITAL NONLINEAR EDITING HAS NOT ONLY transformed the world of video, but also that of filmmaking. The vast majority of feature films in circulation these days are edited in the following fashion: first they're converted to video, complete with timecode and keycode burn-in, then digitized into such popular nonlinear editing systems (NLEs) as Avid, Media 100, Premiere, and Apple's new Final Cut Pro. After arriving at a satisfactory edit, cut lists and optical lists are generated that are sent to the film lab for negative matchbacks.

However, NLEs that are affordable on the front-end mask extra work (and dollars) on the back-end, at the telecine and film matchback stages. Affordable NLEs that can handle the tricky business of converting between the video frame rate of 29.97 (NTSC) and that of film, which works at 24fps, are practically nonexistent. Most high-end NLEs (e.g., Lightworks) that can easily generate negative cut-lists and opticals for film matchbacks cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Independent filmmakers who want an affordable option can turn to software that supplements many affordable NLEs. FilmLogic® from Focal Point Systems., Inc. is one such application.

Be aware that FilmLogic is itself not an editing system, but a database program that works in conjunction with NLEs, allowing you to create an extensive database of your film after it has been transferred to tape and digitized. FilmLogic can handle various 35mm and 16mm film formats and works with both NTSC or PAL video systems.

When film is transferred to video at a telecine house, there are a few ways to go about it. The best method is do a "scene and take" transfer, which is done one take at a time. This process results in a telecine log generated by the technician. FilmLogic can import these logs and create a database of your shots per the transfers. From here, the user can export a batch capture list for any of the NLEs that FilmLogic supports. (And FilmLogic supports quite a few. At last count these included Avid, Media 100, Adobe Premiere, Apple's Final Cut Pro, and EditDV.) These batch capture lists are used to digitize the video footage via the NLE.

The scene and take transfer, however, is an expensive way to go. Most independent filmmakers prefer a "camera roll" transfer, where one roll is transferred to tape at a time. While this is a much cheaper method, you do not end up with a telecine log this way. Fear not, however, because FilmLogic allows you to manually create your database and enter all the information necessary to generate either a batch capture for your NLE or create a cut list for the lab.

The process in FilmLogic is very straightforward. After you have the film lab transfer the film to tape with the key codes and timecodes burnt in, you first digitize the shots into your NLE of choice (we'll use Media 100 as an example here). The next step is to manually create a database by entering all the information on takes and rolls, etc., into the FilmLogic system.

Assuming there is no telecine log available, one must go into FilmLogic and enter the time code and key code information to each of the shots. This is done by opening the digitized media files while inside the FilmLogic application and entering the necessary information.

The FilmLogic interface consists of two basic windows: List View and a Detail View window. These are well laid out and allow you to enter a whole host of information, such as time code, key code, roll and take numbers, and log notes. FilmLogic also allows you to capture a snapshot of the scene for easier identification. Having done that, you can go back to Media 100 and cut your film, letting FilmLogic handle any matchback to film issues.

FilmLogic comes with a Media 100 plug-in that gets dropped into the Media 100 application folder. This allows a special item to show up in Media 100's "File" menu which says "Export CutList with FilmLogic" and which offers some choices to generate opticals, etc. After having finished the editing, one simply generates a cut list using this command and sends it out to the film lab for negative matchback.

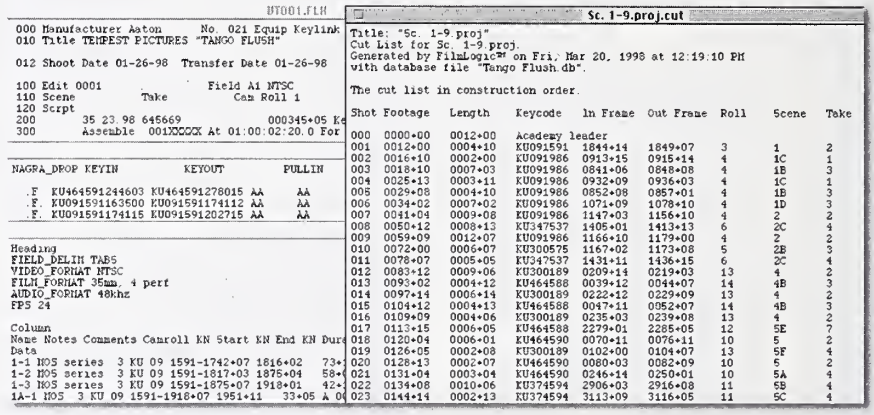
I tried FilmLogic with Media 100, Premiere 5.0, and Final Cut Pro, and it worked flawlessly with each system. However, my past experiences with NLEs have me in a bit of a skeptical mood. What often happens is that making such a process simple involves some expensive ways of transferring film to tape, such as the "scene and take" method mentioned earlier.

So I decided to put FilmLogic through its paces, creating a situation that would test the

flexibility of FilmLogic and its ability to help a filmmaker with a shoe-string budget cut his film and generate a cut list for the film lab. I pretended to be a starving filmmaker (not all that hard) with this simple set up: a borrowed Final Cut Pro workstation (possibly the cheapest and the best NLE around), a copy of FilmLogic, and nothing but a VHS tape of some film transfers with timecode and keycode information burnt in.

own database. I also generated some optical lists for a few dissolves I threw in. I went back over each cut and checked to see if the frame numbers were accurate. They were.

This brings me to possibly the best feature in FilmLogic, which is its ability to work with very little information. Of course we'd all like a "scene and take " transfer and a telecine log to start with, but rarely will we have that luxury, given our characteristically low independent



```
NTOO1.FLH
000 Manufacturer Aaton        No. 021 Equip Keylink
010 Title TEMPEST PICTURES "TANGO FLUSH"

012 Shoot Date 01-26-98  Transfer Date 01-26-98

100 Edit 0001                Field Ai NTSC
110 Scene          Take          Cam Roll 1
120 Scrpt
200          35 23.98 645669              000345+05 Ke
300          Assemble  001XXXXX At 01:00:02:20.0 For

NAGRA_DROP KEYIN              KEYOUT            PULLIN

   .F  KU4645912244603 KU4645912278015 AA      AA
   .F  KU0915911635OO KU0915911741l2 AA      AA
   .F  KU0915911741l5 KU0915912027l5 AA      AA

Heading
FIELD_DELIN TAB5
VIDEO_FORHAT NTSC
FILH_FORHAT 35mm, 4 perf
AUDIO_FORHAT 48khz
FPS 24

Column
Name Notes Comments Camroll KN Start KN End KN Dure
Data
1-1 MOS series  3 KU 09 1591-1742+07 1816+02   73+
1-2 MOS series  3 KU 09 1591-1817+03 1875+04   58+
1-3 MOS series  3 KU 09 1591-1875+07 1918+01   42+
1A-1 MOS  3 KU 09 1591-1918+07 1951+11   33+05 A 0
```

Sc. 1-9.proj.cut

```
Title: "Sc. 1-9.proj"
Cut List for Sc. 1-9.proj.
Generated by FilmLogic™ on Fri, Mar 20, 1998 at 12:19:10 PM
with database file "Tango Flush.db".

The cut list in construction order.
```

Shot	Footage	Length	Keycode	In Frame	Out Frame	Roll	Scene	Take
000	0000+00	0012+00	Academy leader					
001	0012+00	0004+10	KU091591	1844+14	1849+07	3	1	2
002	0016+10	0002+00	KU091986	0913+15	0915+14	4	1C	1
003	0018+10	0007+03	KU091986	0841+06	0848+08	4	1B	3
004	0025+13	0003+11	KU091986	0932+09	0936+03	4	1C	1
005	0029+08	0004+10	KU091986	0852+08	0857+01	4	1B	3
006	0034+02	0007+02	KU091986	1071+09	1078+10	4	1D	3
007	0041+04	0009+08	KU091986	1147+03	1156+10	4	2	2
008	0050+12	0008+13	KU347537	1405+01	1413+13	6	2C	4
009	0059+09	0012+07	KU091986	1166+10	1179+00	4	2	2
010	0072+00	0006+07	KU300575	1167+02	1173+08	5	2B	3
011	0078+07	0005+05	KU347537	1431+11	1436+15	6	2C	4
012	0083+12	0009+06	KU300189	0209+14	0219+03	13	4	2
013	0093+02	0004+12	KU464588	0039+12	0044+07	14	4B	3
014	0097+14	0006+14	KU300189	0222+12	0229+09	13	4	2
015	0104+12	0004+13	KU464588	0047+11	0052+07	14	4B	3
016	0109+09	0004+06	KU300189	0235+03	0239+08	13	4	2
017	0113+15	0006+05	KU464588	2279+01	2285+05	12	5E	7
018	0120+04	0006+01	KU464590	0070+11	0076+11	10	5	2
019	0126+05	0002+08	KU300189	0102+00	0104+07	13	5F	4
020	0128+13	0002+07	KU464590	0080+03	0082+09	10	5	2
021	0131+04	0003+04	KU464590	0246+14	0250+01	10	5A	4
022	0134+08	0010+06	KU374594	2906+03	2916+08	11	5B	4
023	0144+14	0002+13	KU374594	3113+09	3116+05	11	5C	4

The end result—your cut list

I digitized my VHS copy of the film into Final Cut Pro. Bear in mind that VHS has no timecode track. I was relying on nothing more that the timecode burn-in on the tape. Then I opened the digitized media files in FilmLogic and manually created the database by logging each clip. I would open the file in FilmLogic and, by reading the time code and the keycode, fill in the database. Here's where I have a minor quibble with FilmLogic: it needs to build in a fast and reliable Optical Character Recognition to avoid the tedious task of reading the timecode and the keycode burn ins. Creating the database took quite some time, even for a short film. But as a starving filmmaker, I presumably have more time than money.

After creating my database in FilmLogic, I went into Final Cut Pro and assigned a timecode track to each of my clips. (This was done through an elegant feature in Final Cut Pro that allows me to assign a timecode of my choice to any clip.) I then proceeded to edit my film in Final Cut Pro.

Currently, FilmLogic has no export plug-in for Final Cut Pro, so I had to export a CMX 3600 EDL (Edit Decision List) from Final Cut Pro, and then FilmLogic created the final cut list by comparing my CMX 3600 EDL with its

film budgets. FilmLogic even allows you to work with a simple film-to-tape transfer *without* any timecode information whatsoever.

Being able to reverse the telecine pulldown is another nice feature. This restores the clip to true 24fps and takes care of any pulldown, sound sync, or match back issues. The ability to edit at 24fps is very important to some filmmakers. (However, be aware that of the NLEs I mentioned, only Adobe Premiere can edit at 24fps.)

I wholeheartedly recommend FilmLogic for independent filmmakers who want to edit digitally. It is a versatile system that is compatible with numerous popular NLEs and has the ability to work with technically perfect film-to-tape transfers as well as really cheap ones.

For further information, contact:
FilmLogic: **www.filmlogic.com/**
Final Cut Pro: **www.apple.com/finalcutpro/**

For more general information on film-to-video transfers and matchback conversion, see:
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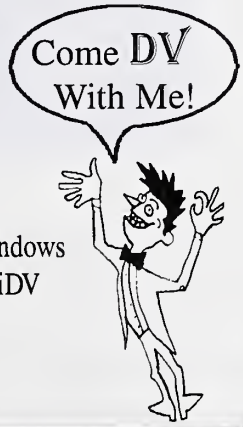
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BY ANDREA MEYER



From Ed Radtke's *The Dream Catcher*

Sacre bleu! "Nous parlons français."

YOUR FILM HAS BEEN ACCEPTED INTO A FOREIGN film festival. While jumping for joy, you notice the section in the festival guidelines that says, "All films must be screened in their original version with German [or French or Japanese] subtitles." Your smile stiffens into an expression of panic. You've already spent all your money shooting the film. You went into debt in post and even further on one precious print, video dubs, and festival applications. Now you're supposed to pay for subtitles?

Steven Bognar found himself in this position when a film he co-produced with Julia Reichert, *The Dream Catcher*, directed by Ed Radtke, got into the Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland, a festival that requires French subtitles on all films selected. "We were very excited to be invited," Bognar says, "but, like many filmmakers, we only had one print in the world. Whether to get subtitles is a big question, because once they're on, they're not coming off. We didn't want to miss a great opportunity, so we were faced with a decision: do we burn subtitles into our one print, or do we turn down the invitation?"

> The single biggest advantage of electronic titles might be that the filmmaker's beloved print remains untouched. He or she can go from festival to festival with nothing but a pocketful of disks marked "French," "Italian," and "German."

This decision is one that countless filmmakers are forced to make. Locarno, like many of the larger festivals, including Cannes, Berlin, and Venice, as well as several of the smaller ones, requires that films be titled in the language of the festival. And subtitling is not cheap. What's a starving indie filmmaker to do?

BEFORE YOU FREAK OUT, TAKE THIS FIRST STEP: FIND OUT WHO IS responsible for paying for the subtitles—you or the festival? Some international festivals, including those in Thessaloniki, Creteil, Turin, and Yamagata, to name a few, provide subtitles for films selected. As Gordon Hitchens, American representative for the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, explains, "The filmmaker sends a cassette with an English transcript that clearly says, 'The boy in the red shirt says this, the girl in the blue brassiere says that.' They'll take care of everything." Valerie Kontakos, U.S. representative of the Thessaloniki Film Festival, reiterates the importance of having a transcript ready when entering the international festival circuit. "If you want to go to foreign festivals, you need one," she says.

There are exceptions—the rare festival that screens English-language films without titles. Producer Gill Holland had the European premiere of Morgan J. Freeman's *Hurricane Streets* in Norway at the Haugesund Film Festival. "Norwegians all speak English," Holland says, "so they don't require a subtitled print. That's important for people to know. The farther North you get, the more English people speak."

But the reality is that most foreign festivals require the filmmaker to provide and pay for a subtitled print. Going back to the case of *The Dream Catcher*, when Bognar and team tried to convince the Locarno administration to help them cover the cost of titles, "They didn't go for it," Bognar says. So the filmmakers dug into their pockets and put French subtitles on their sole print. With no time to shop around, they sent the film to Titra Films in Los Angeles for laser subtitles. "It cost us five thousand bucks," says Bognar. "We got invited to Locarno less than two weeks before we had to go, and we had to turn it around." Ultimately, they were pleased with the titles and did not regret spending their last pennies on them. "It was really good that it was in that festival," he says. "We had a strong presence, we won an award, we got very positive reviews and feature stories in *Le Monde* and *L'Express*. [Director] Ed Radtke is taking the film to Paris to be part of Rencontres du Cinéma à Paris, which is put together by some of the organizers of Cannes. All the good things that are happening in France are because we got those subtitles."

The Dream Catcher crew was lucky. All of the festivals that they've been to since Locarno—Hamburg, Raindance in London, Chicago, and, next up, Rotterdam and Thessaloniki—have agreed to screen their subtitled print. "We haven't hit any roadblocks because of the fact that the film has French subtitles," Bognar says. "Ironically we're going to have our home premiere, in Dayton, Ohio, and the film is going to have French subtitles."

PHOTO: TERRY STACEY, COURTESY FILMMAKER; OPPOSITE: COURTESY ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO HAVING SUBTITLES PERMANENTLY burned onto your print, and that's electronic subtitling. The Thessaloniki, Torino, and Venice Film Festivals, among others, use Softitler®, one of the first electronic subtitling systems. With offices all over the world, Softitler creates titles that are independent of the print and appear on an LED panel that sits below the movie screen, like those used to translate operas. Anne Zimmerman, director of international operations for Classic Titles System, the Florence-based company that developed the system, explains, "There is a display that is hung beneath the screen, and the subtitles are launched from a computer via fiber optic cables, usually from the projection booth." Equipment rental and a technical staff are included in the price.

There are many advantages to choosing electronic subtitles. For one, they tend to be less expensive. What's more, if a film is screening at a festival where Softitler is providing equipment and titles for 80 other films (like they did for the 1999 Venice Film Festival), Zimmerman says "we would have a special price for that."

Morgan Fiume, VP of the L.A.-based Softitler Net Inc., insists that "it's cheaper to hire us to come for one film than to burn subtitles. The hardware—a technician brings it in a suitcase, sets it up, and leaves the next day."

If a filmmaker is in a situation where he or she can use electronic titles, speed is another benefit. Putting subtitles onto a print the traditional way is a complicated process requiring many steps:

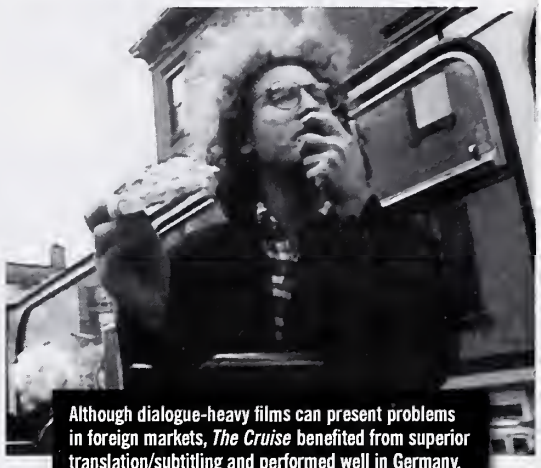
1. Creating a dialogue list.
2. Spotting—breaking down the dialogue into 1-2 line titles, determining in and out points, and marking time codes (for tape) or feet and frames (for film) for the beginning and end of each title.
3. Translation.
4. Subtitling—combining the time codes calculated during spotting with actual dialogue.
5. Simulation for quality control.
6. Synchronization—checking each reel for conformity of length and cuts.
7. Laser engraving.

Fiume says that with his system, you can skip the final steps. "All we need to do is have the translator working until the very last minute. We just save it onto a disk." The titles are activated from a laptop at the actual screening, and a live technician is there to supervise. They never need to see the film print in order to create the titles—just a transcript and a video cassette.

Laser titling, in contrast, requires that each of the preliminary steps be completed before the final engraving can take place. Valerie Gorge, technical director of New York office of the Paris-based Laser Video Titres, says, "The problem is that more and more people edit on Avid, so they don't have a print until the last minute. That makes it very difficult for us. We're the last stop. Sometimes I have to carry the film to Cannes myself."

The single biggest advantage of electronic titles might be that the filmmaker's beloved print remains untouched. He or she can go from festival to festival with nothing but a pocketful of disks marked "French," "Italian," "German." "That's the beauty of it," says Thessaloniki's Kontakos. "You can have a film travel across Europe and not have to get a print with a different language for each country."

All of this pertains to the film festival circuit. If a film is picked up for theatrical distribution in foreign markets, electronic titles will no longer suffice. "It's not a mass-market system," admits Fiume. "If your film is going to a hundred theaters in France, they would all have to have our equipment, which is why right now it's not a possibility."



Although dialogue-heavy films can present problems in foreign markets, *The Cruise* benefited from superior translation/subtitling and performed well in Germany.

Bruce Goldstein, co-president of Rialto Pictures and repertory programmer for Film Forum in New York City, believes that nothing can compete with laser subtitles, even though he's been pleased with the electronic titles that have accompanied some of the traveling retrospectives he's shown, like Tutto Fellini. "The only advantage of electronic subtitles," he says, "is that you can take one print and go all over Europe. It has its gremlins." Purists like Goldstein think that laser subtitles can't be beat. With a system that cuts completely through the emulsion, they are a vast improvement over old-fashioned subtitles. Laser Video Titres' Gorge explains, "It's a tiny laser beam that burns into the emulsion of the film, and the burnt emulsion is then vacuumed. That's why it's so clean. It's like making a hole in a piece of white paper with a cigarette. There is a black circle around it, so you can see the subtitles even on a white background."

The precision of laser titling has its cost. Like Bognar discovered, you're charged for each step in the subtitling process. As Ted Hicks, Titra's New York office supervisor, enumerates, "There's a charge per title. Sometimes a client needs to have a translation done. There's a charge for spotting." An estimate from Laser Video Titres for a 110-minute film comes to $3,737 before translation costs, which range from $1 to $3 per title. Even with the "small discount for IFP members and students" that Hicks says Titra offers, laser subtitling carries a hefty price tag. Goldstein insists, however, that "laser's the best, if you can afford it. When you're not doing multiple prints, there's no point in not doing laser titling. The quality is far superior."

A GOOD RULE OF THUMB IS TO ASSUME THAT LOCAL AUDIENCE-oriented festivals are going to require subtitles, while the major inter-

Subtitling

Die Kunst der Untertitlung Jimaku No Waza

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national markets *may* allow you to get by in English. The Berlin International Film Festival, for example, has different subtitling requirements for different sections. Films in the competition and Forum sections must be translated into German, but selections in the Panorama may be screened in English without German subtitles. Panorama director Wieland Speck says, "I even recommend to the German filmmakers to make English subtitles." He explains: "I consider English the most useful international language, and I want the films to have a life beyond the festival. I consider the international buyers my most important audience—besides press, festival programmers, and the Berlin public. They look in Panorama for art-house films that should make it to the theaters in Europe and beyond." While American filmmakers are safe from subtitling costs, Speck sends other filmmakers to Holland Subtitling. Besides prices that Speck calls "reasonable," Holland offers a 10% price reduction for Panorama programs.

Venice, like many festivals, has its own idiosyncrasies. The festival provides Softitles in English for all films screened, but it also requires Italian titles to be burned onto the print. U.S. festival representative Giulia D'Agnolo says, "for Venice, it's rigid. The Italian has to be on the print, because the digital runs underneath."

There are other festivals that have more flexible requirements, and some may even offer special assistance on a case-by-case basis. In the case of the San Sebastian Film Festival, U.S. rep Bernice Renault says the festival will help subsidize subtitling "only if you're genuinely broke." She explains, "In some cases, they've been known to contribute, but it's very rare." However, in the non-competitive Open Zone section (where most independent filmmakers end up anyway), all films are provided with free electronic titles. As for Berlin's International Forum of New Cinema, which requires German subtitles, "in special cases, the Forum may provide financial support for the costs of subtitling and one print," state the festival guidelines. Bennett Miller's documentary *The Cruise* was one of those cases. "We screened at Toronto," Miller says, "and the next day we got a fax inviting us [to Berlin]. I hesitated to accept—I thought of going to Rotterdam, because they have a good market—but they said 'We'll pay for the new print, the translation, the subtitles, and we'll fly you over.' " With an offer he couldn't refuse, Miller went to Berlin and was glad that he did. "Berlin was a great, great, great experience," he says. "We ended up with eight screenings. They'd only scheduled four. Literally thousands of people saw it. They really got it and loved it in German."

Smaller festivals that are more concerned about local audiences than international buyers generally show subtitled films. Even if they lack the funds to provide titles, they might nevertheless find a way to work with a director with empty pockets. The Avignon Film Festival, for example, requires filmmakers to provide subtitled prints, but according to festival director Jerome Rudes, "If there's a film I really love and they show up and say 'I don't have any money,' then we have to decide if we'll show it or not. That happened last year. We had them bring the dialogue list, and we handed it out with flashlights. That would never happen at a larger festival. We try to work with people."

Steven Bognar had a similar experience. When he took his documentary *Personal Belongings* to the Budapest Film Festival, he says, "They had headphones for the entire audience and a translator reading a transcript into the mike. It was wild to see. That's the low tech way to do it."

In Italian, Todd Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse* was called *Escape from Middle School*. In French, it was *Welcome to the Ungrateful Age*. One of the more important questions regarding subtitles is how to make sure you're getting a good translation. Following leads the festival provides is one way to avoid unpleasant surprises. Jerome Rudes of Avignon says, "I always recommend Laser Video Titres. I know that these people will take care of directors and do a good job." Berlin's Wieland Speck recommends Holland Subtitling. Thessaloniki and Venice swear by Classic Titles. Of course, the best way to insure satisfaction is to work with the translator. As part of a series of American films that D'Agnolo programs every year for the Turin Film Festival, she programmed Spike Lee's version of John Leguizamo's *Freak*. "Its language is very New York," she says. "So basically, I worked on the phone with the woman who was translating. You can always finesse it."

What if you don't have a festival curator personally supervising your translation? Some filmmakers, like Gill Holland, just let go. He says of the Spanish subtitles on *Bobby G. Can't Swim*, which recently screened in San Sebastian, "It is weird if you speak the language to see the film subtitled differently from how you would have. But translation is such an art. And when you're only paying $2,000, you're only getting the bare bones." His co-producer, Michael Pilgram, on the other hand, was thrilled with the same titles, which they had translated and spotted at Katina Productions in New York and burned on by Titra. Pilgram says, "Katina's very good, and they work for a low budget." Bennett Miller, who was more hands-on than the *Bobby G.* team, says that the translators Berlin hired called him with questions. "We discussed things over the phone," he recalls. "I also had a German friend read the translation; they emailed it to me. My friend said it was really good. He had almost no comments."

Once you take the plunge and decide to get your film subtitled, there are ways to save money. For one, you can shop around and find places like Katina Productions, which do subtitles for an indie-friendly price. Larger houses like Titra, and especially those recommended by the host festival, might be ready to cut a deal. There are also steps in the process—transcribing, translating, even spotting—that you could conceivably do on your own to save money. Most importantly, says Bognar, "I would urge any filmmaker to do the transcript yourself. You'll get the whole script, um for um, pause for pause, the way you want it. There's no excuse not to do that, even if you're not going to spot it yourself" (which he did for *Personal Belongings*, through a painstaking procedure that involved red and green thread).

It seems clear that there are more than two answers to the question "to subtitle or not to subtitle?" According to Bognar, "Ultimately it comes down to what's best for your film. There are all kinds of opportunities to spend money on your film, and you have to constantly weigh whether it's worth going more into debt. I would still say it was worth it to make the sort of European splash that we've made."

Andrea Meyer is a freelance writer living in New York and a former co-producer and programmer of the Avignon Film Festival.

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Y2K Time Capsule

FOR SOME PEOPLE, MAKING THE TRANSITION TO Y2K IS SIMPLE. IT INVOLVES NO MORE than a few technical precautions: Back up your computer, withdraw some extra cash in case the banking system freezes, don't get in a spot where you have to depend on a functioning air traffic control system—then relax. Uncork some bubbly. Be happy.

For others, entering the year 2000 inspires a sense of awe, perhaps a moment of deep reflection about our tiny place in the great cosmic machinery. No doubt, someone out there is preparing a missive to the future, a message in a bottle thrown out into the infinite sea of time—a time capsule for future millennia.



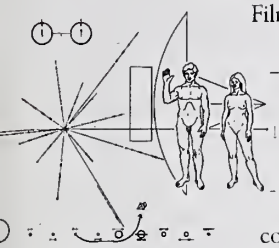
We at *The Independent* would like to add our small part to this endeavor, to relay to the future or to far-flung beings a sense of what film culture is like at this moment in time. To this end, we've asked 12 prominent members of the film industry to imagine the following:

The United States is preparing a Y2K Time Capsule. You've been selected as the person who will pick the objects pertaining to film and video. What would you choose and why?

NASA's LAGEOS ball from Cathleen O'Connell's documentary *Time Capsule: Message in a Bottle*

Alan Berliner, documentary filmmaker

A Letter to the Future: Greetings from the year 2000. While I'm certain this time capsule contains many antique objects for your curiosity and enjoyment, my personal feeling is that you've come here looking for something else. Though I can't foretell the exact extent of your current crisis, my letter speaks of a future I can easily imagine. Of technological developments I can readily foresee. Of the inevitable mid-life crisis of the information age.



We are the ones who used to be called the storytellers. Filmmakers. Videomakers. Mediamakers. We come from a time when new forms of digital technology were just about to replace the old tools and conventions of celluloid and videotape, when the old vocabulary of cinema had begun to fade, to lose its meaning (some say its relevance) and was replaced by binary codes and electronic computer commands. These technological changes promised to make the tools of storytelling simpler, cheaper, and abundantly accessible to the masses.

Now that everyone is the producer/director/designer of their own personal website (when did they become mandatory?), I realize I'm not talking to specialists anymore. So what do you call yourselves? Time Architects? Interactivists? Cybernetters? The view from here has me imagining startling developments in artificial intelligence, virtual technology, information encryption, and cybernetics. Micro-miniaturized stereo retinal cameras—recording imagery made as simple as seeing itself; bio-ports—for direct neural input and output transmissions; voice recognition software—finally eliminating the need for keyboards; genre formula programs—eventually eliminating the need for editors; computers as full creative partners—acknowledged by name in the credits.

Like the 19th century invention of photography or the 20th century revolution in desktop publishing, the unprecedented opportunity for anyone who wished to become both sole creator, distributor, and Internet impresario of their own work promised to once again liberate art and change the world forever. But something went wrong.

Despite all the radical advances in the how and the democratization of the what, you've somehow forgotten the essence of the why. Information overload, an over-saturated media environment, and a pervasive sense of creative detachment have left you feeling more and more uninspired. You've lost touch with the spirit and passion that has always driven people to create, to excite, to surprise, to teach, to evoke, even to shock their fellow human beings.

I've placed a zoetrope at the bottom of this time capsule. Turn off the lights. Hold it in your hands. Shine a candle (if you can find one) or a flashlight (if you still have one) or your pocket laser beam (more likely) upon it, and gently spin a magically animated old-fashioned optical illusion. Feel that sense of sheer wonderment. Behold the persistence of vision. This is what we can help you remember.

Su Friedrich, experimental filmmaker

I would compile a 16mm film reel made up of scenes that show at least some of the greatness and craziness of filmmaking during its first century. I would include an Eike projector and a nice screen.

I can't describe the whole reel in a few words, but here's how it begins: The opening sequence of Igmar Bergman's *Persona*; Chantal Akerman eating sugar in her film *Je, Tu, Il, Elle*; Maya Deren in bed in her film *Meshes of the Afternoon*; Toshiro Mifune confronting the kidnapper in Kurosawa's *High and Low*; James Cagney on the oil tank in Walsh's *White Heat*; the Odessa steps sequence from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*; the second half of Kyle Kibbe's *100, N.Y., N.Y.*; Yvonne Rainer in her boxing robe talking about breast cancer in *Murder and murder*; the spinning woman in Martin Arnold's *Pièce Touchée*; the sex scene in Ngozi Onwurah's *The Body Beautiful*; the crew of *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* revolting against the director, William Greaves; Hauser confounding the logician in Werner Herzog's *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*; Buster Keaton clearing logs from the train tracks in *The General*; the rocket landing on the moon in Georges Méliès' *Trip to the Moon*; Fred singing in Leslie Thornton's *Peggy and Fred in Hell*; Jack Lemmon dancing with a rose in his teeth in Billy Wilder's *Some Like it Hot*; the section of Anne Severson's *Near The Big Chakra* that includes the tampon string; Mae West's defense of her diamonds in *She Done Him Wrong*; Walter Guttman singing the praises of trapeze artists in *Circus Girls*; Martina breast-feeding her mother in Peggy Ahwesh's *Martina's Playhouse*; Barbara Stanwyck cheek-to-cheek with Henry Fonda in Preston Sturgess' *The Lady Eve*; Manuela's declaration of love in Leontine Sagan's *Maedchen in Uniform*; and Leighton Pierce's *Going Out in the Morning*.



Clockwise from left: from the pictorial plaque accompanying the Pioneer F spacecraft; Westinghouse's 1965 time capsule; souvenir booklet from world's largest time capsule, Seward NE.

Cathleen O'Connell, documentary filmmaker

Greetings extraterrestrials. In the year 1999, earthlings known as "independent filmmakers," a wily and resourceful breed of humanoids, used celluloid, videotape, and ancient digital technologies to make art, communicate, and entertain. So that you may study the remains of our ancient culture, we have placed in this time capsule some representative samples of our most powerful tools.

First, an analog specimen: the super 8 film camera. Despite its crudeness, it can capture great beauty. And as an example of its potential, we've included some home movies of the O'Connell family Thanksgiving, circa 1969 A.D. To demonstrate the diversity of our tools, we've included a rare and exotic camera, the Fisher-Price PXL-2000. We uncovered this at an archaeological site known as eBay. Finally, the triumph of late 20th century's technology, a prosumer digital camera. (Perhaps your archaeological research will tell you if DV has gone the way of Betamax and the brontosaurus.) But the most important tool we've left for you in the time capsule is a sharp pencil with a good eraser, for no matter what technology you use to make a film, it always starts by putting an idea down on paper.

Rather than include an subjective list of the "best



COURTESY GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE MUSEUM; NASA; HAROLD DAVISSON

"Rather than include a subjective list of the 'best independent films,' we cryogenically froze indie guru John Pierson."
—Cathleen O'Connell

independent films," we cryogenically froze indie guru John Pierson. When you unfreeze Mr. Pierson, he should be able to answer almost any questions you have.

Finally, a plastic credit card. Something no independent filmmaker should be without in any millennium.

Chris Eyre, feature director

I needed an object to define film for the country's Y2K time capsule. It was a hot steamy night. No, actually, it was a frigid late afternoon. I sat thinking at The Village Idiot. A couple of swigs later, my thoughts turned to the mountains of the West, the wind and the smell of sweetgrass burning across the prairies where the plains were turning dormant and cold, just like here, inside the bar. I was feeling no pain as the New York sky rumbled from a distant thunderstorm passing over New Jersey or Queens. Suddenly it was black, and I remembered a quote by the late, great William Burroughs: "Boys,. when the crap begins to fly, get out of the way!" I was out of the way and then it came to me. I would create the perfect humanoid for the time capsule and call it, yes, *Frankenflick*.

Frankenflick, a hermaphrodite hybrid born from the miseducated and confused mind of a 20th century American Indian man in New York. The humanoid will have the great film mind of Martin Scorsese, Will Sampson's face, Al Pacino's hair, Bette Davis' eyes, Jack Nicholson's smile, Uma Thurman's body, Jessica Lange's voice, Rock Hudson's ass, and Gene Kelly's legs. It would be a creature composed of celluloid flesh, with the blood of thousands of undistributable indie filmmakers running through its veins in Technicolor. *Frankenflick* will have a *Bartlett's Book of Quotes* imprinted into its head for use on game shows and at cocktail parties. *Frankenflick*'s first sentence will be a quote for life:

> *When the Sun died, I went up to heaven and saw the Creator and all the people who had died a long time ago. The Creator told me to come back and tell my people they must be good and love one another, and not fight, or steal, or lie. He gave me this dance to give to the people.*
>
> — *Wovoka* (1889)

Then *Frankenflick* will cut-a-rug.

Ruby Lerner, executive director, Creative Capital Foundation

My Y2K time capsule would include:

1) all Congressional records with any mention of the National Endowment for the Arts from the time of Reagan's election to the end of the millennium;

2) the entire text of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; and

3) the *New York Times* coverage of the Brooklyn Museum of Art's "Sensation" exhibit.

Whoever finds this at the dawn of the next millennium will have archival evidence of the steady demise of the importance of free expression as a shared value at the end of this century. Those who unearth the capsule will also discover in these documents the systematic demonizing of artists, as well as an underlying agenda to attack the value and legitimacy of public space, in both its literal and figurative manifestations.



The *Sounds of Earth* record carried on the 1977 Voyager spaceship, containing the sounds of nature, music, and a message from President Jimmy Carter.

Speech, they will find, is free only when privatized or corporatized. The Telecomm-unications Act of 1996, which even Bob Dole called the biggest corporate welfare giveaway in the history of the country, handed over billions of dollars worth of our public airwaves to corporate interests with few public interest requirements in return.

Our researchers may be confused by late 20th century rhetoric glorifying the private sector as the locus of all that is good and the public sector as the embodiment of all that is wasteful and bad, especially by those who serve as publicly elected officials. Ironically, the public sector origins of the primary driver of the twenty-first century economy, i.e. the Internet, could be a shocking discovery to our researchers.

"Whoever finds this at the dawn of the next millennium will have archival evidence of the steady demise of the importance of free expression as a shared value at the end of this century."
—Ruby Lerner

Mainly, these time capsule documents will clarify for our archivists how their world has come to be, with its individualized home entertainment fortresses controlled by the one remaining megacorporation, the lone victor in the mid-millennium Corporate World Wars.

Perhaps the recovery of the time capsule will spawn in our researchers a reconsideration of the value of public discourse that may be occasionally contentious. Perhaps it will also stimulate their desire to help foster a healthier relationship between the public and private sectors—one that respects what each sector does best.

Elizabeth Peters, AIVF/FIVF executive director

I would include an object that is already nearly extinct: a Steenbeck flatbed editor. The granddaddy of nonlinear editing systems, this workhorse has defined the editing process with exquisite simplicity since the advent of sound film. Even though I'm part of the problem (I've worked as an Avid assistant on my most recent jobs), I think it's a shame to see the unilateral shift to purely digital editing. Cutting on a flatbed is a tactile and intimate process, one that forces continual review of material and considered choices. It imposes discipline that clarifies the mind and opens it to creative potential. And the machine itself: what a wonderful metaphor for the editing process! You are confronted with a massive object; you lean forward and embrace it: gears lock, wheels spin in all different directions, your work progresses. As you gain mastery over the machine, you gain mastery over your material. What was once complex becomes simple and absolute; working the controls becomes second nature, just as your material is gradually shaved into its essential form. A flatbed is analog in the extreme: you see the literal engagement between sound and image; as the shutter revolves, you see the absent places between the frames. Already an entire body of emerging artists has been alienated from this experience. Sitting at my computer typing these words, I feel nostalgia for the whirr of the flatbed's motor, the rhythmic swish of plates, the definitive clack of the splicer, the smell of emulsion, the gleam of light from parts interior (revealing the mechanics of operation), and most of all, the gentle blue image flickering on ground glass, providing teasing promise of the glorious experience to come—that of the projected work in its finished form.

Mark Crispin Miller, professor of Media Ecology, New York University

If we're going to let the future know what "independent film" or "independent video" was like back in these good old days, we'll have to give posterity some sense of what we mean today by "independent." Exactly what was this work independent *of*? That question may not make sense even 20 years from now, much less a thousand, given the intoxicating speed with which the culture industries worldwide are now hyper-commercializing and converging—a trend that could enclose and gentrify, and so perhaps annihilate, the very ground of "independent" cultural production, visual and otherwise. (Digital advances may also make both "film" and "video" seem just as quaint to our remote descendants as, say, cuneiform appears to us, but that's another matter.)

The best we might do to get the point across could be to salt away a range of visual works that itself starts to demonstrate the recent slow extinction of "independent" visions, genres, styles. We might do this by tracing the long evolution of certain avant-gardist attitudes or content into corporate product or decor. How, for example, have we moved (or been moved) from Karel Capek's 1920 satiric play *R.U.R.* to the seminal dystopias of Orwell and Huxley (while not film or video themselves, such works are highly influential on practitioners of both) to Godard's *Alphaville*, Pasolini's *120 Days of Sodom*, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, and also Scott's famed faux-Orwellian TV spot for Macintosh?

How did Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* get mainstreamed by, and in, the culture of TV? It used to stand out as a challenging and strikingly subversive doctrine. Now TV, movies, and the web, as well as magazines and billboards, all routinely smack us with a bastard version of it, literally everywhere we look—a cool bombardment based on no doctrine, aesthetic, or politic, but only on the desperate daily propaganda struggle to "break through the clutter." For that matter, the full range of technical devices that once bespoke a radical departure from the seamless norm—devices like the jump cut, hand-held camera, or ironic non-synchronous narration—are stale tricks all too visible in countless TV spots and music videos. A smart selection of tapes, disks, stills, and reels of film might show that such is what has happened by the time of this distracted *fin de millénaire*.

Of course, the "independent" consciousness has, in its time, not enriched the margins only, but contributed to much of what is best within, or at least on the outskirts of, the mainstream spectacle. Moreover, it still does so even now, against all odds. To make this point, I'd also pack the time capsule with prints of *Eyes Wide Shut* (along with copies of the many bad reviews, which also tell us quite a lot), *The Usual Suspects*, *Clockwatchers*, *Fast, Cheap and Out of Control*, *The Last Big Thing*, *Rushmore*, *Election*, π, and *Boogie Nights*, among many others. This way, the viewers of the future may look back at us and see that there was more than co-optation going on.

Stacey Spikes, director, Urbanworld Film Festival

This time capsule would actually be a subterranean IMAX theater with a full THX surroundsound Dolby speaker system. We would then need one mummified projectionist for good luck, one bag of popcorn, one Diet Coke from the fountain, and the 10 greatest movies of all time:

1. *Baraka*—I have never had a film completely change my life as this one has. It is the greatest film of all times. If you have not seen it, you have not lived.



Time capsules—they're not just for scientists any more! Both companies like Westinghouse (above) and individual "time capsule consultants" like John Mallory (left) have helped the public prepare messages for the future.

2. *La Femme Nikita*—Luc Besson is the man. I would list all of his films, but we will let *Le Femme Nikita* stand as a classic.
3. *Shaft*—Need I say more?
4. *Baghdad Café*—Gotta love this charming classic. This feel-good character study is a great rainy-day movie. And you gotta love that theme song.
5. *Blade Runner*—I have seen this film more than any other and each time see a new film with new meaning.
6. *Pulp Fiction*—The coolest film that was ever made. Period.
7. *Star Wars*—This changed everything.
8. *Do the Right Thing*—Breaking ground with substance.
9. *Pink Floyd: The Wall*—The movie to which you did all the things that you will tell your kids to never do.
10. *Dumbo*—The first film I ever saw, which made quite an impression. My mother had to explain to me for months that Dumbo's mother was only a character and did not really die.

Rick Prelinger, film archivist

Time capsules are the conceptual art of history. Yet these exercises in unofficial remembrance tend to rely heavily on records produced by influential people and their organizations: newspapers, coins, programs from the burial ceremony, group pictures, etc. Since one now can preserve visually readable microimages of text, graphics, and data for thousands of years on nickel-plated Norsam discs, I'd try for what was most ephemeral and unlikely to survive in libraries, archives, or private collections. Like 'zines on every subject, the more rant-filled the better. Independent media work galore. As much of the Internet as I could cram into an aluminum cylinder. Lots of visual documentation of our everyday environment, which changes too quickly for us to keep track of. Recordings of phone calls, conversations, two-way radio chatter, nighttime street noises, the sounds of shopping malls. Finally, a Leatherman, space blankets, magnetized needle, fishhooks, and magnesium firestarter, just in case the lucky finders happened to be in need of warmth, food, or shelter.

COURTESY JOHN MALLORY; GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE MUSEUM; OPPOSITE: NASA

James Schamus, producer, Good Machine

I'll choose simply one, if not representative, then I think exemplary, work: Todd Haynes' *Superstar*. This wonderfully conceived biopic of songstress Karen Carpenter is the site for a great many independent topoi. It's an outlaw movie—Todd never got the rights to the songs or for the use of the Barbie dolls who embody his characters. It melds fact and fiction, understands live action as a kind of animation, is queer in more senses of the word than the OED will ever imagine, makes high and low cultures shake hands and a few other appendages, is inspired freely from classical American avant-garde roots (Jack Smith, Kenneth Anger), Hollywood melodrama (Douglas Sirk et al.), and film theory culture, is fascinated with and illuminates gender/body issues, neither ignores nor prostrates itself before narrative, and—it's really great.

Ellen Schneider, executive producer, *P.O.V.*

Late in the 20th century, a crop of talented independent filmmakers focused on riveting characters against backdrops of sweeping social issues. Audiences responded: sometimes moved to tears, sometimes jolted into action. I'd pack the following collection (as subjective and personal as the genre) into the battered suitcase from Deborah Hoffmann's *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter*:

1. Marlon Riggs' pink triangle tee shirt

In the 1980s, celebrating the black/gay experience was taboo! (Earlier in the century, so were double beds for married TV couples.) Riggs' poetic video essay *Tongues Untied* became both a rallying cry and a lightning rod.

"I'll choose simply one, if not representative, then I think exemplary, work: Todd Haynes' *Superstar*."
—James Schamus

2. Juanita Buschkoetter's braces

David Sutherland's six-hour series *The Farmer's Wife* triggered such profound empathy for the economic plight of family farmers that some viewers responded with their checkbooks. One example: a dentist donated orthadontia to the main subject.

3. Tom Joslin's S-VHS camcorder

Small-format video cameras permitted the documentation of real life with minimal intrusion, but nothing captured love—in the age of the AIDS epidemic—the way Joslin's and Peter Friedman's *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* did.

4 & 5. Arthur Agee's Converse sneakers and Barbara Kopple's nimble footwear

Some filmmakers were so committed to telling these stories that they spent years following their characters. In Kartemquin Films' *Hoop Dreams*, aspiring basketball player Agee shows off the athletic shoes he's inscribed with the name of his hero Isaiah Thomas, and virtually comes of age on camera. Others risked their lives: Kopple and crew deftly dodged bullets directed at strikers while filming *Harlan County, U.S.A.*

Todd McCarthy, chief film critic, *Variety*

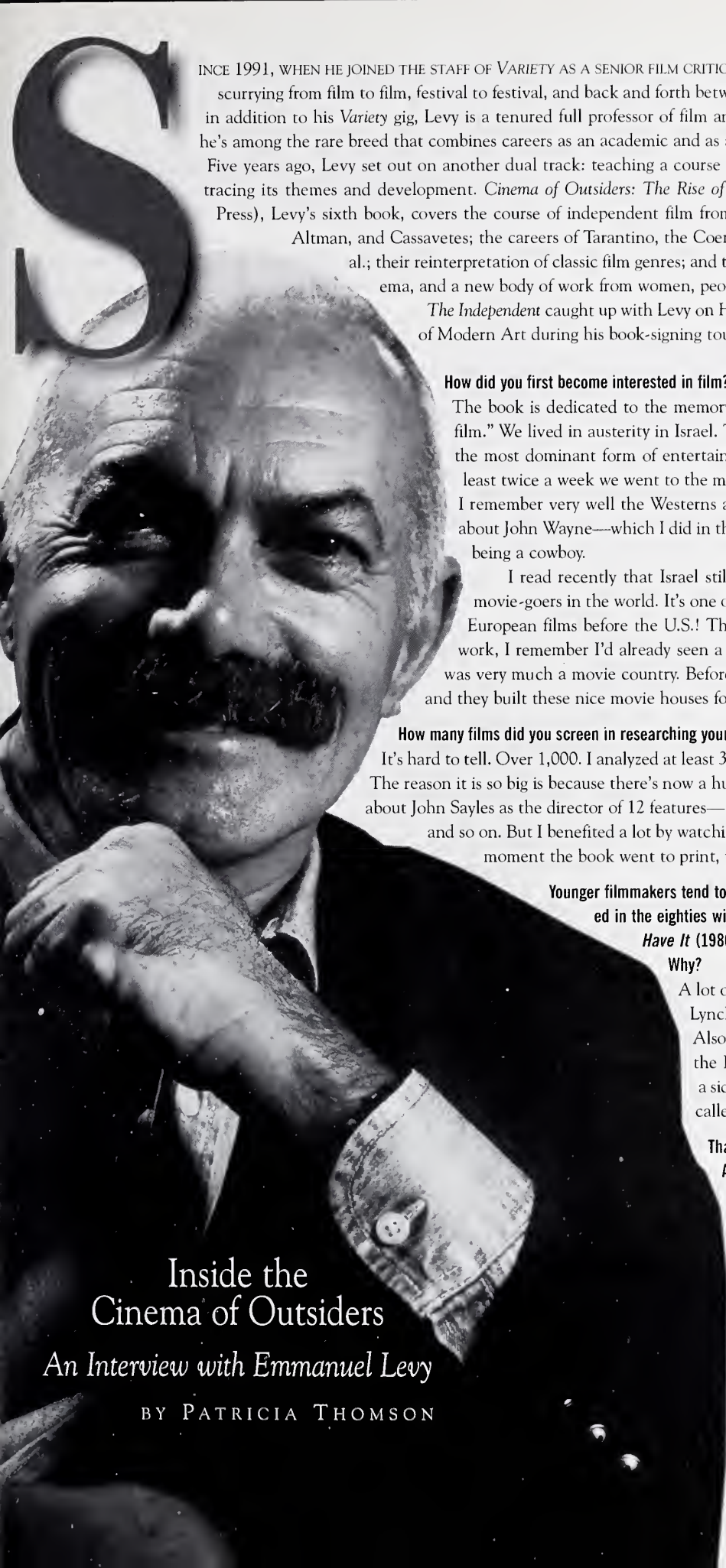
Whenever film critics are asked to select anything to take to a desert island, salt away, represent our time, and so on, the focus is invariably a 10-best list, the greatest/favorite/most important films of all time, the pictures you wouldn't want to live without. Then it becomes a question of how you narrow down the choices, between favorite directors, actors, eras, childhood memories, emotional milestones, official landmarks. But that's been done a thousand times, and there seems to be little question now that, in some reduced form or another—video, DVD, and formats yet unknown—most of the films that currently exist will be preserved after a fashion. What I instead believe is the most endangered aspect of the film world at this point, one that may not survive even a decade into the new millennium, much less a century, is the filmgoing experience as we have known it for virtually the entire 1900s—and the reasons why the movies became far and away the most popular communal pastime in human history.

"What I believe is the most endangered aspect of the film world at this point . . . is the filmgoing experience as we have known it for virtually the entire 1900s."
—Todd McCarthy

So what I would propose is building a capsule or a giant craft spacious enough to house several movie palaces of different sizes and designs, and an imaginative programmer inspired by the challenge of booking the right movies in the right theaters (based on the implication inherent in this assignment, I shall restrict myself to American pictures). Since silent films reigned for nearly 30 years of the century, they should be strongly represented, and I would propose a double bill of Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* and Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*, presented with live musical accompaniment for the former in a setting very much like the jewel-box Opera House in Telluride, Colorado. Radio City Music Hall would be reserved for audiences to experience musicals, from *Golddiggers of 1933* and *The Wizard of Oz* to *Singin' in the Rain* and *West Side Story*.

The sort of ornate, commodious, balconied theater that was the hallmark of nearly any reasonably-sized American town from the '30s through the mid-60s would be suitable for the general run of Hollywood product during that time, the perfect place to experience *The Awful Truth* and *Casablanca*, *Notorious* and *Rebel without a Cause*. Of all the theaters that showed 70mm films in roadshow engagements during the '60s, the ones where films looked best were the Michael Todd and Cinestage, virtual twins in Chicago with enormous screens and short projection throws—*Lawrence of Arabia* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* could play there side-by-side in perpetuity. For smaller, more intimate pictures—for *On the Waterfront*, *Shadows*, *Mean Streets*, *Annie Hall*—you could scarcely do better than the old wood-paneled Plaza in Manhattan. And for specialists keen on a change of pace, we should transport a good, old-fashioned grind house—those on 42nd Street and on Market Street in San Francisco were the most rewardingly grungy in my experience—to show triple-bills of Westerns, war films, actioners, popcorn movies of all kinds, as well as a sticky-floored adults-only theater and a revival house—the daily-change double-bill Clark Theater in Chicago is the hands-down pick here.

The point is that, while the films mentioned above, and thousands more, are very much with us and will continue to be, all the theaters invoked, and nearly all those like them, are gone. Soon, I believe, digital home viewing systems will be so sophisticated and widespread that there really will be little motivation to venture out of the house to see anything but the most exceptional and spectacular productions, and even then in surroundings that are mostly commonplace and uniform. Viewing movies in theaters is already not what it used to be, and not too many years from now, attending the "cinema" will mostly be a private activity, and only a time capsule or machine could make it public again, the way it was when movies were born and flourished.



Inside the Cinema of Outsiders

An Interview with Emmanuel Levy

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

SINCE 1991, WHEN HE JOINED THE STAFF OF *VARIETY* AS A SENIOR FILM CRITIC, EMMANUEL LEVY HAS BEEN A MAN ON THE MOVE—scurrying from film to film, festival to festival, and back and forth between his two regular jobs in two different states. For in addition to his *Variety* gig, Levy is a tenured full professor of film and sociology at Arizona State University. As such, he's among the rare breed that combines careers as an academic and as a staff critic on a major magazine.

Five years ago, Levy set out on another dual track: teaching a course on independent film and writing a 600-page book tracing its themes and development. *Cinema of Outsiders: The Rise of American Independent Film* (New York University Press), Levy's sixth book, covers the course of independent film from 1977 to 1998, tracing the influence of Scorsese, Altman, and Cassavetes; the careers of Tarantino, the Coen brothers, Spike Lee, Ang Lee, Allison Anders, et al.; their reinterpretation of classic film genres; and the rise of the New York school of film, regional cinema, and a new body of work from women, people of color, and gays and lesbians.

The Independent caught up with Levy on Halloween, shortly after he was feted at the Museum of Modern Art during his book-signing tour.

How did you first become interested in film? Did your parents take you to the movies?

The book is dedicated to the memory of my mother, "who instilled in me a passion for film." We lived in austerity in Israel. There was no television until 1968, so movies were the most dominant form of entertainment. We didn't have much money to eat, but at least twice a week we went to the movies. So I saw all the John Wayne movies as a kid; I remember very well the Westerns and the crime gangsters, and I *had* to write a book about John Wayne—which I did in the eighties, to go back to my boyish fascination with being a cowboy.

I read recently that Israel still has one of the highest per capita populations of movie-goers in the world. It's one of the top three or four. At that time, we used to get European films before the U.S.! The first year I arrived here, in 1973, to do graduate work, I remember I'd already seen a lot of these movies in Israel and in Paris. So Israel was very much a movie country. Before it became Israel, it was dominated by the British, and they built these nice movie houses for themselves, and we inherited that.

How many films did you screen in researching your book?

It's hard to tell. Over 1,000. I analyzed at least 300. I took five years to research and write the book. The reason it is so big is because there's now a huge body of indie films. All of a sudden, we can talk about John Sayles as the director of 12 features—that's a lot. David Lynch has 10, Soderbergh, eight, and so on. But I benefited a lot by watching them chronologically, from their debut up to the moment the book went to print, which was March or April '99.

Younger filmmakers tend to think of the independent film movement as having started in the eighties with films like *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984), *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), and *sex lies and videotape* (1989). You start in 1977. Why?

A lot of major directors began in the late seventies. David Lynch, Gregory Nava, Charles Burnett, Alan Rudolph. Also organizationally speaking, 1978 is the beginning of the IFP, when the New York Film Festival programmed a sidebar—put together by Sandra Shulberg—and it was called the New American Independent Cinema.

That became the Independent Feature Film Market. Also, AIVF was founded in 1975.

Right. And in 1977 to 1979, John Sayles was making *Return of the Secaucus Seven*.

There are four figures, all from NYU, who put independent cinema on a level of commercial appeal: Jim Jarmusch, with *Stranger than Paradise*; Susan Seidelman, with *Smithereens*, the first American independent film to be shown in competition in Cannes; the Coen brothers in 1985 with *Blood Simple*—drop-outs of NYU; and Spike Lee. I know why some people consider 1984, '85 as the beginning, but it's not. You have to do justice to people like Gregory Nava and Victor

The whole motto of the book is that we cannot talk anymore about one Hollywood. We should talk about two Hollywoods: mainstream Hollywood and independent Hollywood. But it's Hollywood.

Nunez, whose first film was in 1977 as well.

I did not want to talk about Cassavetes, except as a influence, or Scorsese (also NYU). His late sixties movies are independent, but I wanted to talk about the new cinema. But any beginning is arbitrary. *Pink Flamingos*, the earliest movie I discuss, was in 1972. How do you classify Shirley Clarke? Maya Deren? I wanted the new. It's definitely a late seventies phenomenon.

How do you define 'independent' today, versus 20 years ago?

I had, like, 300 pages on the definition, out of which 20 went into the book. Basically, there always have been two ways of defining independent cinema. One is by the way they're financed, produced, and made. Second, which is more intriguing but much more difficult to define, is by the spirit, the independent spirit.



I wanted to write a book about small, low-budget movies that were made outside Hollywood. How low budget? The problematics of what we're talking about is really relevant, because I see the Independent Spirit Awards nominating films like *Rushmore*, a $15 million film made by Disney (Touchstone)! *Mean Streets* was distributed by Warner, and it was also developed by Warner. Whereas *After Hours* was released by a studio, but it's an independent film. So do you go by the way it's made, or by the distributor? That's yet another complication.

Yet there *is* such as thing as independent cinema. The whole motto of the book is that we cannot talk anymore about one Hollywood. We should talk about two Hollywoods: mainstream Hollywood and independent Hollywood. But it's Hollywood.

In the book, you're pretty hard on independents. You write, "Indie films, as a whole, are not artistically ground-breaking or politically provocative. Despite offbeat characterizations, most indies lack unusual stories, experimental pacing, fractured narratives, or kinetic editing, to mention a few radical devices." Elsewhere you use the phrase "mainstream independent."

Yeah. *Happy, Texas* is the epitome of that. In its theme and style, there's no independent spirit there. It's just a small budget *Some Like It Hot*, if you wish.

When I talk to French filmmakers, it's interesting. They say, "I like very much that you don't talk about independent cinema as a 'movement', because in order to constitute a movement, you need an intellectual father." You need a platform, like Dogma 95. We don't have it, and I think it's a blessing. On the other hand, we don't have anything like *Cahiers de Cinema*, an organ that will crystallize the intellectual opinions. And that's why it's not a coherent movement. It's more loosely defined. In America cinema, directors do not come out of criticism; all the New Wave directors were critics. Here they come out of film schools. So maybe we don't have intellectual directors.

Your chapter on gay and lesbian cinema was one of the strongest because it situates this cinema in a context. It lays the groundwork with documentaries like *Word is Out* and *The Celluloid Closet* and it discusses the nonprofit infrastructure—the film festivals, the alternative press, etc.—that paved the way for a gay and lesbian feature scene.

While your book includes very much, for the most part it excludes the entire nonprofit sector—the documentaries, the experimental work, the media arts centers . . .

My next book is on the documentaries.

Was this omission for practical reasons, or do you really see the "new independent cinema" as being on a wholly separate track?

I distinguish between the new American independent cinema and the avant-garde, experimental, underground. It is not political. We don't have people following the footsteps of Andy Warhol, who is not in the book, except in a footnote. Jonas Mekas is not in the book. There already are several books about the American underground.

Yet Yvonne Rainer *is* in your book.

Right, and Nina Menkes, because they made the festival circuit. And independent cinema is very much dependent on festivals—not just Sundance; there's a whole network. There's still an avant-garde, but I wanted to talk about movies that had exhibited publicly and gotten some recognition, and directors who have sustained careers. A lot of directors made one good movie, and we never heard from them again. They deserve as much recognition, and I apologize to them in public, but the book I submitted was 800 pages long!

Now, there was a whole chapter on documentaries—150 pages—that began also in the seventies with Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County*. I had 25 landmark documentaries, but the book was so huge they were taken out. I already have contracted with NYU to do a book about documentary, the work that's the equivalent of the new journalism.

You make a point of the apolitical nature of indie features. In this respect, you see little difference between American indies and Hollywood. As you write, "Film after film suggests that any problem, political or economic, can be resolved by a charismatic individual."

They share a fear and suspicion of politics. In indie cinema, we have only one major type of political film, and it is has to do with politics of identity and representation. I think every film Todd Haynes has made is very political; not just *Poison*, but *Safe* is a political film. But it's always done through an individual protagonist. *Go Fish* is also a political movie. It's about sexual identity, political representation, not about issues. It's all about 'How do I present myself to the world? How do I live?' Lifestyle; that's the politics. Not about the system: how do I change it, how do I fight?

It's still about the individual.

Oh, absolutely. I'm a sociologist, so I think this lack of politicized cinema reflects biases of Americans that prevail in society at large. Americans are not interested in politics; they're really not. Vietnam was a turning point; it increased suspicion.

So the fact that indies are staying away from politics is closer to Hollywood, but they are talking about issues of identity. Sexual identity is a major issue. A movie like *Heavy* is a political movie; it's about politics of the representation of obesity. That would not be handled by Hollywood. So there's still a difference between independent and

Hollywood movies. The only political movies we see from Hollywood are the conspiracy movies, and they have to be camouflaged with a major star. There *was* a short cycle of movies about AIDS, actually; this is politics. But who would see *Philadelphia* without Tom Hanks?

Does this lack of political filmmaking have to do with directors' aspirations or with financing?
It's very hard to get financing; there's no audience for political movies. Even mainstream political movies fail. *Bulworth* was a major box office flop.

How about *Bob Roberts*?
It was a Paramount joint release and went to Cannes. Only $2 million.

***Wag the Dog*?**
It did very well. Context, context, context. It came out during Bill Clinton's, you know . . . it came at a very good time. But it had Dustin Hoffman and Robert De Niro! Imagine *Wag the Dog* with Philip Seymour Hoffman and William H. Macy. It would have been a great movie, but how many people would have seen it? There's no audience for political movies. *Amistad* was a failure. Not a bad movie. Not great, but decent. Who wants to see a movie about slavery in America? For most Americans, you go to the movies to be entertained, not to be provoked. Unlike European cinema in many ways, you don't go to movies to engage in something.

Your book looks at how indie filmmakers have utilized and revised existing genres, such as film noir, coming-of-age comedies, family dramas, etc. Can you speak of any genre that has been newly created in the past 20 years? Or does all cinema today somehow build on forms created during the first 50 years of cinema?
Excellent question. I cannot think of a genre that was invented. What indies will do is take an established genre and revise or change the conventions. So, for example, noir becomes neo noir. The screwball comedy could become, under Gregg Araki, something like gay screwball comedies. Is the genre Tarantino launched a distinct genre or a subgenre of noir? Is "noir comedy" a new genre? It may be. Classic noir is not comic. This might be the only example.

You made me think about something I'd not thought of before: what is the similarity between Neil LaBute, Todd Solondz, and Tarantino? *Happiness* may be a new genre—and *American Beauty*; we now see it in the studio system. Dark comedies about existential issues. There was always a streak of comedy noir, but the classic noir that we all champion was very serious.

Almost every movie that I write about, it has become like a cliché: "A darkly comic view of family." *The Ice Storm* falls under this category, too. Do you consider the new kind of films that the Coens perfected, then Tarantino, then Todd Solondz and LaBute, a variation of an existing genre, or a distinct genre in its own right? Is Tarantino an innovator, or someone who steals or borrows from different genres? The package is fresh. Is *Pulp Fiction* a fresh movie or not? That would be the test. I would claim that it is, in the way that *Kafka* was stilted, just a bit of German Expressionism, a bit of Kafka, a bit of noir. It was a pastiche. There's a difference between pastiche and a combination of generic conventions that results in something new.

Imagine this: it's the year 2040, you're finally retiring. As you accept your gold watch, you reflect back on cinema at the turn of the century. How would you characterize these times? Is this a Golden Age or the End of an Era?
I think it's a good time to be a filmmaker. It's much easier to make movies now than ever before. What is harder is to find theatrical distribution. But I'm encouraged by the new technology—and frightened at the same time: that anyone in this country can make a movie for $15,000, and I will have to review it! I've actually had such anxiety dreams—nightmares—that I'm crushed by videocassettes falling down from the ceiling, and I'm buried.

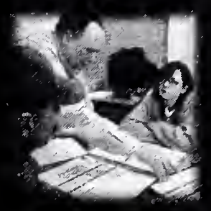
Hollywood, it's hard to tell. When we saw *Mean Streets* in '73, when we saw *Jaws*, we thought they were good movies. But when we look back now, they're *brilliant*, not good. Do we have cases that will change our perception? When *Citizen Kane* came out, it was dismissed for various reasons. Now for many of us it's the greatest American movie ever made. What would be the equivalent in the indie world?

But by and large, I would say the nineties are very good. There's more money; directors are much smarter because of the way they are trained. They may know too much about film and too little about reality, like the Coens, but I think overall the film schools provide a positive function. Critics are much more sophisticated than they were in the fifties and sixties. Film magazines like *The Independent* did not exist then. We have an institutional matrix. It's a very good time to be a filmmaker.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

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STRAND RELEASING

BY LISSA GIBBS



Marcus Hu & Jon Gerrans of Strand Releasing.

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What is Strand Releasing?
Strand is an independent entertainment company specializing in the distribution of quality, review-, and festival-driven motion pictures.

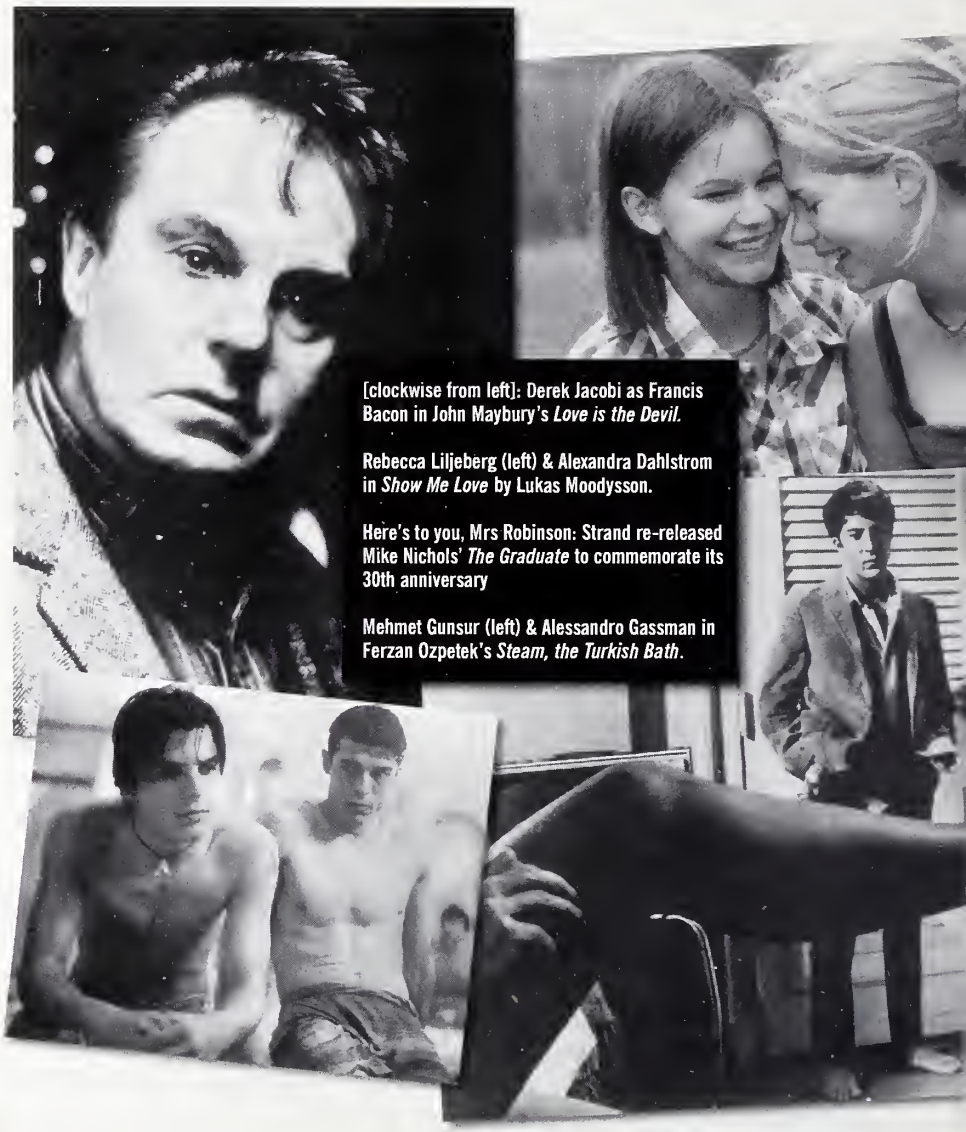
Who is Strand?
Jon Gerrans and Marcus Hu, co-presidents; Gail Blumenthal, V.P. distribution; Rajeev Malhotra, manager, sales and booking; Giovana Driussi, director of acquisitions; and Victor Syrmis, co-president, Strand/New Oz Productions.

Total number of employees at Strand:
Eight full-time (and countless individual per-project participants).

How, when, and why did Strand come into being?
We started at the Strand Theater in San Francisco—then owned by co-founding partner Mike Thomas (who departed three years ago), Marcus Hu, and me [Jon Gerrans]—with a foolish dream that this would be easy.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind Strand:
If we don't enjoy it ("it" being the film, the people involved), we don't do it. We're wonderfully selfish in that way.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Strand or its founders and/or key staff?
Perhaps the breadth of what we actually do. We release 10-15 pictures a year, operate a full-service video line, do broadcast licensing, and this year produced/co-produced three pictures from a full development slate with some very talented filmmakers.



[clockwise from left]: Derek Jacobi as Francis Bacon in John Maybury's *Love is the Devil.*

Rebecca Liljeberg (left) & Alexandra Dahlstrom in *Show Me Love* by Lukas Moodysson.

Here's to you, Mrs Robinson: Strand re-released Mike Nichols' *The Graduate* to commemorate its 30th anniversary

Mehmet Gunsur (left) & Alessandro Gassman in Ferzan Ozpetek's *Steam, the Turkish Bath.*

How many works are in your collection?
I haven't counted lately. It's somewhere between 130-150.

Is there such a thing as a "Strand" film?
John Waters described Strand Releasing as "the Grove Press of distribution," which was pretty cool, and why I'm recycling his quote. Hopefully a Strand film is one you would like to see, because you definitely are not going to see a studio distributing it.

What types of works do you distribute?
We try not to let the format, content, genre, or style dictate our decision (the audience does). Mostly we handle feature length, 35mm motion pictures, but we have successfully packaged short films (*Boy's Life* and *Boy's Life 2*) We distribute a lot of gay-themed pictures. Half of our slate is foreign language—from which country, it does not matter. We also have done a half-dozen re-releases.

Best known title in Strand's collection:
Tough question and it could also get me in a lot of trouble, but the obvious, although I don't hear the title associated with Strand very often, would be the re-release of Mike Nichols' *The Graduate.* More realistically

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though, Andre Techine's *Wild Reeds,* Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt,* and the shorts compilation *Boy's Life.*

Other films and filmmakers you distribute:
Gregg Araki's *Totally F***ed Up,* Jon Jost's *All the Vermeers in New York,* John Maybury's *Love is the Devil,* Alison Maclean's *Crush* and *Contempt,* Brian Sloan's *I Think I Do,* and Benoit Jaquot's *A Single Girl.*

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
It always comes down to a couple of basic points: do we like the film; would we be proud to be associated with it; do we believe it will receive a generally positive critical reception; is there a marketing angle which we feel we could successfully exploit; and last but not least, the nasty part, do we believe it can generate enough interest to refill the coffers?



Is Strand also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
Strand has a separate company to produce films called Strand/New Oz Productions (a partnership with Victor Syrmis' New Oz Films). The idea is to produce films that can either be sold or distributed by Strand Releasing. This year we produced or co-produced three films including *Psycho Beach Party,* a co-production with Red Horse films, directed by Robert Lee King (whose short film *The Disco Years* we distributed as one of the *Boy's Life* films), based on Charles Busch's off-Broadway play. We were also involved in the production of Australian director Paul Cox's *Innocence* and Chiam Bianco's *Split.* We have been associated with seven other productions including Gregg Araki's *The Living End* (producer) and Brian Sloan's *I Think I Do* (executive producer).

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Define the audience, gauge the potential commercial interest, create a campaign to match, determine the appropriate theater, then fight to get it.

Where do Strand titles generally show?
You don't catch our titles at the shopping mall. Thank God for the Landmark theater chain, Laemmle Theaters, the Quad in New York, and the independent arthouses across the country. On a successful release, we will play in over 100 of these theaters in 100 different cities (although it can take 12 months to do so).

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
Most of our films come from film festival screenings—Sundance, Cannes, Berlin, and Toronto—where we more often get the first exposure. Unfortunately it takes three to six months before the sales agent acknowledges that Miramax has "officially" passed, along with Miramax $$$$, and our offer is finally accepted. We often work with producers/directors at the earlier stages, and prefer to do so. Approach us through your lawyer, agent, mutual friend, or the Internet, but please, no coldcalls.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From *Frisk* at $20,000, to others at $10 million. It really doesn't matter what the budget is to us (that's the investors' headache). We treat the film based on what we believe it will do commercially, rather than what it costs to get there.

Biggest change at Strand in recent years:
I can finally afford a really soft chair with a high back, which gave me the posture to co-produce three titles this year.

Most important issue facing Strand today:
Besides staying in business, it is finding a better way to bridge the gap between studio-owned independents and companies like ourselves. This is not easy.

Where will Strand be 10 years from now?
Besides finally replacing my 10-year-old chair, hopefully we will be doing the same thing, on a larger scale, and working directly with the filmmakers we admire.

You knew Strand Releasing had made it as a company when . . .
our bank called up and asked if we would like a line of credit. Actually, it took five years before we were able to quit our temp jobs and work full-time at what we love.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
Nothing feels better than acquiring a picture that nobody else wanted and making it a success. Marcus Hu had pursued Ferzan Ozpetek's Italian/Turkish production *Steam: The Turkish Bath* for over a year before the rights were finally secured. The picture has grossed close to $1 million over the past 12 months, receiving very favorable reviews, strong exhibition support, and big fat smiles from everyone at Strand.

Other companies you admire and why:
We've acquired a number of pictures from both Good Machine and Killer Films, both companies which we greatly admire (the Grove Press of producers). Zeitgeist, Kino, New Yorker, and Cowboy are some distributors, who, like Strand, do what they do because they love it.

The best film you've seen lately was . . .
The other day our office took a field trip to watch *Being John Malkovich.* I couldn't stop laughing and the following day at work we were quoting lines.

The difference between Strand and other distributors of independent films is . . .
probably the volume. We may release similar titles, but our staff is slightly larger, which allows us to distribute (all the way through broadcast) and produce more titles per year than other "similar" companies.

If you could give independent filmmakers only one bit of advice it would be to . . .
please, please be ORIGINAL. You can't imagine how many films we screen that say exactly the same thing the previous year's independent "hit" said.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
We're currently negotiating on four titles. Of course keep an eye out for *Psycho Beach Party,* the satire on the 60s beach movie involving a split personality surfer-wannabe named Chicklet, which stars Lauren Ambrose, Thomas Gibson, Matt Keeslar, Nicholas Brendon, and Kathleen Robertson, and written by Charles Busch from his stage play. Also Gough Lewis' documentary *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, Coky Giedroyc's *Stella Does Tricks*, from the U.K., and John S. Curran's *Praise,* from Australia, to name a few.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one in which . . .
we're going to need the so-called "new media" to help breathe additional monetary life back into the business. Too many of us are struggling and giving up, which equates to fewer choices for filmmakers. The studio independents cannot financially justify the smaller films and the maverick distributors are not surviving on box-office revenue alone. With video revenue evaporating and broadcast revenue minimal, the future for the second-tier distributors lies in, I believe, the future of the new media.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Selling popcorn at a movie theater.

Famous last words:
"Would you like butter with your popcorn?"

Distributor FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE

BY MICHELLE COE


IFFCON's Wendy Braitman

IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; fax: 495-2381; info@iffcon.com; www.iffcon.com

What is IFFCON?

IFFCON [International Film Financing Conference] is an annual conference in San Francisco with a dual purpose: to educate filmmakers about financing independent films in today's global marketplace, and to facilitate direct contact between independent filmmakers and international financiers, commissioning editors, co-producers, and distributors.

When and why did it come into being?

Michael Ehrenzweig and I [Wendy Braitman] inaugurated IFFCON in 1994. Prior to that time, I had been attending CineMart in Rotterdam for years and always found it a valuable forum. In 1993, Michael and I represented the film *The Celluloid Closet* at CineMart and were ultimately successful in securing a deal with Arté for co-financing. It was on the long plane ride home from the Netherlands following CineMart that the idea for IFFCON was born. The plan was to launch a humane co-production market specifically targeted at North American independent producers with projects in development. And critical to the plan was for San Francisco to be the host city, not only because it's one of North America's most beautiful, but because this is where Michael and I live.

What types of alliances has IFFCON formed with other international markets?

IFFCON has alliances with the Pusan Promotion Plan in Korea, CineMart in Rotterdam, and IFP's No Borders. In general, these alliances were formed to share and promote selected international projects in development through our respective events. Specifically, we are very pleased that the upcoming edition of CineMart has reserved a slot for a project from IFFCON 2000.

What distinguishes IFFCON from these other markets?

The signature of IFFCON is found in its intimacy: only 60 independent filmmakers are accepted into the full three-day event, with a fairly even ratio of "buyers" and "sellers." It is the only event of its kind not connected to a larger screening component, which helps contribute to its cozy atmosphere. At IFFCON, our main commitment is to the producer—some of the other markets are more auteur-driven. And with San Francisco as IFFCON's host city, away from the industry hubs of LA and NY, we find everyone seems more generous to share information and contacts.

The driving philosophy behind IFFCON is . . .

First of all, to de-stress the extremely stressful business of looking for financing. And our loftier goal is to open doors between independent producers and the international industry, persuading both to participate in a forum in which they get to know each other, develop relationships, and forge financial partnerships that are not dependent upon nonprofit subsidy.

Briefly, how is IFFCON structured?

IFFCON begins with Open Day, by presenting overview panels that cover a range of introductory topics. With registration open to the public, Open Day draws some 400 attendees. Despite this large number, Open Day maintains a contact-friendly atmosphere. The conference moves to deeper levels of specificity and personal contact during the following two days, held at public television affiliate KQED. These two days are limited to the 60 producers accepted through the selection process. Programming includes workshops, panel discussions, roundtables, and private meetings. Social events, including a closing night film and reception, are interspersed throughout to offer participants opportunities to develop professional relationships in a personal setting.

Does the applicant or the buyer choose who they meet with for their private meetings?

Before the conference, buyers preview the IFFCON dossier, which profiles the 60 selected producers and their projects. They may then request as many private meetings as they would like with the producers of their choice. The producers are also allowed to schedule one private meeting of their choice from a select group of buyers.

Who are some of the funding entities and broadcasters that attend IFFCON?

TV buyers: Channel 4, BBC, NHK, Arté, HBO, PBS, The Learning Channel, Arts & Entertainment, Bravo/IFC. Film Companies: Miramax, New Line, Fox, Strand Releasing, USA Films, Alliance Atlantis Communications, TiMe Film and TV Produktions, Zero Films, Haut et Court, plus sales agents and co-producers from Europe and Asia.

What types of producers attend? Are there restrictions on an IFFCON applicants' qualifications (e.g., genre, geography, medium)?

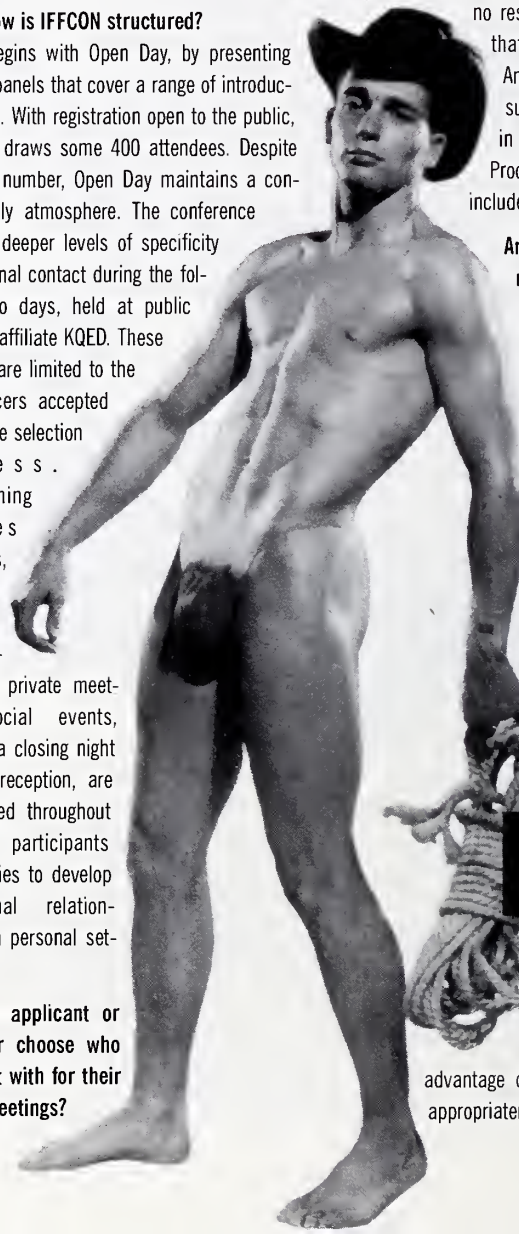
Producers of both fiction and nonfiction features attend, all with varying levels of experience. There are no restrictions aside from the requirement that producers must be from North America and project proposals must be submitted in English. Producers working in all film/video formats are eligible. Producers from outside North America are included only by special invitation.

Are producers invited or is it open registration?

IFFCON extends an open call to U.S. and Canadian producers with projects in development for which they are seeking international financing or co-production. A Selection Committee reviews applications and recommends up to 60 of the most promising projects.

How do you select the filmmakers?

Hundreds of filmmakers submit synopses, personnel biographies, and budget information of their fiction and non-fiction projects to IFFCON each year. Sixty are chosen by a Selection Advisory Committee of North American development executives, based on the applicant's readiness to take advantage of the opportunity and the project's appropriateness for international markets.


From *Beefcake*, Thom Fitzgerald's homage to muscle mags.

What is the ratio of applicants to projects selected?
We had close to 300 applicants this year, and we accept 60—so I guess that's 1 out of 5.

What can producers expect to get out of IFFCON?
I'll start by saying what producers cannot expect to get out of IFFCON, which is an immediate deal. But producers can expect ample opportunities—both formal and informal—to meet key development executives from around the world who are looking to finance and/or acquire North American films. They will meet their producing peers and have the chance to learn about international financing, distribution, and sales. Participants will find a relaxed atmosphere in which to pitch their projects, and be fed the best of Californian food and drink.

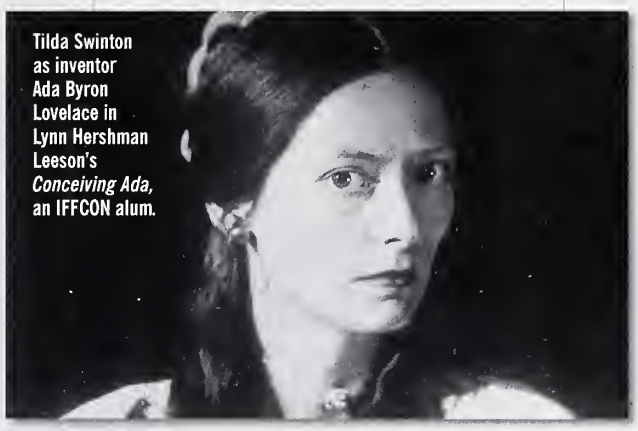
Do you track projects once they leave IFFCON? If so, what percentage of projects get funding as a result of connections made at IFFCON?
The Alumni Project, now being developed through a planning grant from the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, will provide: a communications network to track the progress of alumni and their projects, promote innovative partnerships, report success stories of independent producers, and increase exposure of these filmmakers in ways that will enhance their potential to form successful new alliances. Information about alumni and networking resources will eventually be made available through IFFCON's website.

Can you mention a few projects funded through IFFCON?
Here are some alumni that we're thrilled to have helped: Thom Fitzgerald, Dreux Ellis (*Beefcake*); Sharon McGowan (*Better Than Chocolate*); Lynn Hershman, Henry Rosenthal (*Conceiving Ada*); Dan Cogan (*The Lifestyle*); Rob Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman (*Pink Triangle*).

What advice do you give applicants to make their project stand out from the others?
First and foremost: have a really great, original idea. And with that, a lot will be forgiven. After that, some of the basics: good simple writing; no typos; no reduced type; no small margins. I know it sounds banal, but it makes a huge difference. Having some money already in place helps, as does talent and/or crew already attached. And the critical element is a producer who can inspire confidence in the financier that the film will actually get made, and made well.

Does your staff offer consultations prior to IFFCON on how to pitch a project? What basic pitching advice do you extend to producers?
Though there are no staff consultations, transcripts of previous pitching sessions are available from the "IFFCON Shop" at www.iffcon.com. Producers are advised by the staff before the conference to keep their pitches short, to allow time for questions and feedback. The most valuable advice comes from buyers and other industry guests, who help producers sharpen their pitching skills during pitch roundtables. These roundtables consist of 5 or 6 producers each allotted 10 minutes to pitch their projects, answer questions, and receive feedback from a small audience of buyers.

What is a common mistake producers make when trying to interest potential funder?
A common pitching mistake is to tell too many details of the story, rather than a brief and compelling overall concept. In the words of Joe Pichirallo from Fox Searchlight, a great educator of pitching a story, "It's not important that we hear the specifics, but there has to be a progression, and a quick one. Starts out here—boom—crisis, and resolution."


Tilda Swinton as inventor Ada Byron Lovelace in Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Conceiving Ada*, an IFFCON alum.

What advice can you give producers on using IFFCON to find the right funding or co-production partner for their projects?
We print an Industry Directory with bios of all industry participants so that producers will know who they are pitching to. We also have panels and roundtable discussions with buyers to enable producers to better familiarize themselves with potential partners. And finally, we have an incredibly hospitable staff willing to help as much as possible.

Do all the buyers participate in Buyers Best Picks? Did those projects that were mentioned for their obvious potential in the marketplace usually get picked up by IFFCON buyers?
IFFCON 99 was the inauguration of Buyers Best Picks, and we were quite pleased with the results. This forum features selected buyers being asked to list their favorite projects at the conference. IFFCON seems to lend itself to candor, so the selected buyers were able to talk thoughtfully and honestly about projects, and the same projects got mentioned again and again. And I'm pleased that a number of those projects have since moved forward because of IFFCON.

How has IFFCON evolved with the increase of independent projects in an overcrowded marketplace?
IFFCON remains intimate despite the increase of projects in the marketplace. For IFFCON 2000, we will have our first-ever keynote address by Jack Lechner, formerly of Miramax, Channel 4, and HBO, who will be speaking to that very issue—a kind of "where do we go from here?"

What would people most be surprised to learn about IFFCON and/or its staff?
Putting on IFFCON is like financing and producing a low-budget movie every year, and that our core staff (as many as five at the height of pre-production) works together in an office the size of a shoebox. Another surprise: each and every staff member is a supermodel in his/her spare time.

Which financing companies or broadcasters do you most admire for their ability to work with independent producers and take a strong project to the next level?
I'll keep my answer limited to some previous IFFCON participants: Alliance, Channel 4, ZDF, HBO, Time and Zero Films from Germany, Haut et Court from France, ITVS, Strand, Open City Films, among others. . . .


From Jennifer M. Taylor and Vicky Funari's hybrid documentary *Paulina*.

Famous last words:
I just heard this today from Michael Lewis, who wrote an acclaimed new book about Netscape founder Jim Clark: "Chance favors the prepared mind."

Funder FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.

PHOTOS COURTESY IFFCON & TURBULENT ARTS; *BEEFCAKE* PHOTO: JOHN DAVIE

FESTIVALS

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (MARCH 1 FOR MAY ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 30-May 7, OH. Deadline: Feb. 14. 27th annual fest acknowledging current technical possibilities in film/video production. Each entry is pre-screened by a committee of artists. Works w/ high regard for artistic innovation, sensitivity to content & personal involvement w/ the medium are welcomed. Cash prizes & production services awarded to competition winners in each category, incl. narrative, doc, experimental & animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on 1/2" NTSC, 3/4" U-matic & 16mm prints are acceptable. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 plus SASE/insurance. Contact: AIFVF, Athens Center for Film & Video, Box 388 Rm. 407, 75 W. Union St., Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330; fax: 597-2560; bradley@ohiou.edu; www.cats.ohiou.edu/~filmfest/

ATLANTA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, mid-May, GA. Deadline: Feb. 23rd annual fest seeks independently produced shorts & features in the following cats: animation, narrative, doc, student & experimental. All lengths, all formats. Awards: $20,000 in services & equip. awarded in several cats. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $40 (individual/nonprofit); $30 (IMAGE members/students); $50 (distributor/for profit); add $5 for foreign. Contact: AFVF, Genevieve McGillicuddy, Fest Dir., IMAGE Film/Video Center, 75 Bennett St., Ste. N1, Atlanta, GA 30307; (404) 352-4254; fax: 352-0173; afvf@imagefv.org; www.imagefv.org

AVIGNON/NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL, April 24-30, NY. Deadline: Feb. 25. **RECONTRES CINEMATOGRAPHQUES EURO-AMERICAINES**, June 22-27, France. Deadline: May 12. 6th NYC spring fest is the American version of the 17-year-old Avignon Film Fest. Both events feature top line-up of U.S. & French film premieres, retrospectives, VIP encounters, seminars & fetes. Audience vote decides 4 winners; awards total $80,000 in prizes to 2 winning feature directors & 2 shorts directors in NYC. In Avignon, 3 winning feature directors share $80,000 in prizes w/ fest accepting films from other European filmmakers for 1st time. Any style or genre. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL or SECAM). Entry fee: $25. Contact: Jerome Henry Rudes, General Director, French-American Center, Inc., 198 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10013; (212) 343-2675; fax: 343-1849; jhr2001@aol.com; www.francetelecomna.com

BAC INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 6-12, NY. Deadlines: March 15; March 31 (late). Brooklyn Arts Council presents 34th annual fest to be screened free at various venues throughout city, incl. BMA & BAM. Narrative, doc, experimental & animation works accepted in following cats: feature (over 70 min.), short, student (college) & student (K-12). Formats: Beta, 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10 (K-12); $25 (student); $50. Add $15 for late deadline. Contact: BACFVF, Brooklyn Arts Council, 195 Cadman Plaza W., Brooklyn, NY 11201; (718) 625-0080; fax: 625-3294; baca195@aol.com; www.artswire.org/baca

BALTIMORE'S QUEER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 9-19. MD. Deadline: Feb. 28. Fest accepting short & feature-length narrative, doc, experimental films, videos & animation. Purpose of fest is to exhibit work by, about & of interest to lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered people around the world. Formats: 1/2" S-VHS, VHS or 3/4" Beta. Contact: BQFVF, Chris Lines; (410) 882-6470; queerfilm@juno.com; www.members.home.net/b926w/queerfilm.html

CALIFORNIA SUN INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, April, CA. Deadline: Feb. 28. 3rd annual fest seeks work in traditional animation, computer animation & experimental animation for screenings in L.A. area. Program will be selected by panel incl. top industry animators. Awards incl. "The Golden Sun" for best of fest & "Silver Stars" for top work in each cat. Formats: digital, 35mm, 16mm, S-8, Beta SP, 3/4" U-matic, 1/2". Entry fees: $20 (student); $30 (ind. short); $50 (studio short); $75 (ind. feature); $95 (studio feature). Contact: CSIAF, Attn. Liane Polosky/Vidimation, Art Dept-8300, CA State Univ., Northridge, CA 91330; (818) 382-4545; fax: 677-3046; videoart@csun.edu; www.csun.edu/animate

CAROLINA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 15-19, NC. Deadline: Feb. 18. 10th annual fest held at the Univ. of N. Carolina at Greensboro. Continuing goal is to exhibit works of ind. artistry & personal vision. This year's theme is "Futuroscope: Visions of the Future." Fest accepts work in all genres & cats, incl. animation, doc, exp., narrative & student short. Projects of all lengths & originating on all formats accepted. Awards of $2,500 in cash & Kodak film stock. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on NTSC VHS. Entry fees: $25 (student); $35. Contact: CFVF, Dahron Johnson, 100 Carmichael Bldg., Box 26170, UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27402; (336) 334-4197; fax: 334-5039; cfvf@uncg.edu; www.cfvf.cjb.net

CONDUIT DIGITAL FEST, mid-March, TX. Deadline: Feb. 15. 4th annual fest celebrates the convergence of various media & computing technologies by offering showcase of cutting-edge digital technology from around the world. Fest features digital shorts, animation & feature films of any genre. Any full-motion video sequences from computer-gaming will be considered. Fest will showcase these highly original works in a cinema setting utilizing a digital projector. Fest incl. panels, Q&A sessions, screenings, parties & live performances. Formats: Betacam, Mini-DV, VHS, S-VHS, Hi-8, (prefer not to receive DigiBeta). Preview on 1/2" VHS (NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: Conduit, 906 E. 5th St. Ste. 103, Austin TX, 78765; (512) 485-3147; info@conduitfest.com; www.conduitfest.com

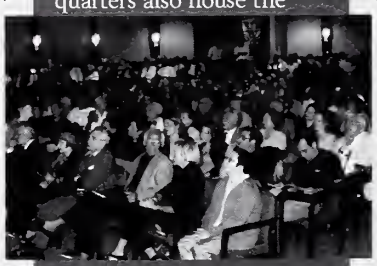
FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL, June 9-18, FL. Deadlines: Feb. 25; March 24 (late). 9th annual 10-day fest featuring foreign & U.S. indie films, seminars, midnight movies, celebrations & special guests. Held at Enzian Theater, major indie nonprofit cinema, fest has evolved from exhibition-only fest to juried competition. Cats: feature, short, doc. Awards incl. Jury Award in each cat. & Audience Award. Entries for competition must have at least 51% U.S. funding. Features must be 50 min. or more. Fest sponsors sidebars, special events, seminars & receptions. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30 (feature); $15 (short); add $15 for late deadline. Contact: FFF, Matthew Curtis, Program Dir., Enzian Theatre, 1300 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland, FL 32571; (407) 629-1088; fax: 629-6870; filmfest@gate.net; www.enzian.org

HOUSTON INT'L FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL/WORLDFEST-HOUSTON, April 7-16, TX. Deadline: Feb. 15. Large fest w/ many competition cats, now in 33rd yr. Only totally indie film accepted, no major studios or distribs accepted, only new, indie features & short films. At 33 years, oldest film festival operating under the same continuous management. Awards: Remi Statuette is Grand Prize for top fest winners. Gold & Silver Lone Star Awards & Framed Awards, associated market for features, shorts, docs, video, ind./experimental, new media, music video & TV. Student Awards Program offers $2,500 cash for grand prize & $500 cash & $2,500 of Kodak raw stock 35/16mm film for best student film. Scripts & screenplays also have competition. Cats incl. theatrical features; film & video production; short subjects; experimental; super 8; screenplays & new media. Fest also offers 3-day seminars on writing screenplays, producing & directing, plus distribution & finance. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, PAL, NTSC, Secam, super 8 (on VHS videotape). Entry fees: $45-$150; market fee: $300. Entry forms avail. on web site. Contact: Worldfest-Houston, Entry Director, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256; (713) 965-9955; (800) 524-1438; fax: 965-9960; worldfest@aol.com; www.worldfest.org

JOHNS HOPKINS FILM FESTIVAL, April 13-16, MD. Deadline: Jan. 15; Jan. 29 (late). 3rd annual fest, presented by Johns

SOUTHERN BELLE

The Atlanta Film and Video Festival has highlighted local and regional film- and videomakers for nearly a quarter century and is the largest and longest-running festival in the Southeast. The fest has exploded in popularity recently, tripling in attendance over the last five years. Atlanta's IMAGE Film & Video Center, a nonprofit media arts organization, helps to present the festival. Their headquarters also house the



fest's showcase of short works by Georgian artists: Local Lounge. Last year's event was the largest one to date, with over 150 featured works, 34 of them Georgian, and 42 featured artists in attendance. The fest's juried competition included notable jurors Gill Holland, Lisanne Skyler, and Elvis Mitchell.

See listing.

Hopkins Film Society, is a 4-day, multi-venue extravaganza. Last year's fest drew over 2,200 attendants & showed over 100 films. Fest will feature panels, speakers, ind. distributors & lots of parties. Cats: narrative, doc, animation, experimental, short. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, all video & DV. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $25 (early); $35 (final). Entry form avail. on web site. Contact: JHFF, 3003 N. Charles St., Apt. 406A, Baltimore, MD 21218; (410) 516-2517; nobones@jhu.edu; www.jhu.edu/~jhufilm/fest/

L.A. FREEWAVES, Nov., CA. Deadline: Jan. 31. 7th annual fest seeks videos, films, CD-ROM, web sites, culture jams, public media by artists, activists & mediamakers. Cats: experimental, narrative, doc, art or animation to be considered by 10 curators for public access TV programs, screenings at MOCA, Filmforum & other art venues. Also looking for community media activities, public art media projects, multimedia installations & performances, youth media works, video bus tours in LA, messages for public electronic signs, blimps, etc. Entry fee: $10 (except students). Formats: VHS, 3/4", Beta-SP, URL & Mac-compatible CD-ROM. Send resumé or bio & contact info to: LAF, 2151 Lake Shore Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90039; (323) 664-1510; fax: 664-1577; freewaves@aol.com; www.freewaves.org

MIAMI GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, April 12-16, FL. Deadline: Jan. 15. 2nd annual fest is looking for work of all genres, lengths & formats incl. dramatic, doc & experimental works, by, about &/or of interest to lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered communities. Last year's fest drew audiences of over 5,000, w/ films screened from around the world. Works must be Miami premieres; awards given in numerous categories. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: MGLFF, 1521 Alton Rd., #147, Miami Beach, FL 33139; (305) 534-9924; fax: 535-2377; festivalinfo@the-beach.net; www.miamigaylesbianfilm.com

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 7-22, MN. Deadline: Feb. 1. 18th annual fest is the largest film event in the upper midwest, bringing in more foreign & American ind. films to MN than any other film org. or event. Program is predominantly foreign, focusing on Scandinavian & Eastern Europe films, especially those w/ politically relevant themes. Emerging filmmakers section is showcase for self-distributed, ind. filmmakers; entries are selected by a jury in cats: short fiction, short doc, feature doc & feature doc. Awards: Emerging Filmmaker awards & Audience "Best of the Fest" Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35 (shorts, under 40 min.); $50 (features). Contact: MSPIFF, Univ. Film Society, 2331 Univ. Ave. SE, Ste. 130B, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4431; fax: 627-4111; filmsoc@tc.umn.edu; www.ufilm.org

NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL, June 21-25, MA. Deadline: April 14 (film); March 10 (screenplay competition). 5th annual fest focuses on screenwriters & their craft, presents feature films, short films, docs, staged readings, Q&A w/ filmmakers, panel discussions & Morning Coffee With... series. Writers are encouraged to present their films & works-in-progress & get feedback from other screenwriters & filmmakers. Entries must not have had commercial distribution or U.S. broadcast. Awards: Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting Competition; entry must be screenwriter's original, unproduced work; Audience award for best feature and best short, best new filmmaker (writer/director award).

CALL FOR ENTRIES

5TH ANNUAL STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL

July 19 - 29, 2000
Staller Center for the Arts
State University at Stony Brook, Long Island, NY

Competitions in 16mm and 35mm films including features, shorts, documentary and animation. Largest venue (1,000+ seats) and film screen in the region (40 ft. wide)! Previous guests and honorees include SteveBuscemi, Rod Steiger, Eli Wallach, Bai Ling and Cliff Robertson.



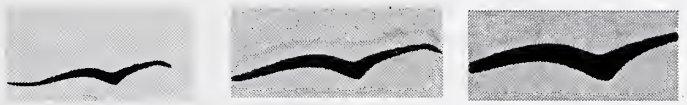
For more infomation, call **516-632-7233**
or email **pcohen@notes.cc.sunysb.edu**
Entry forms are available online at
stallercenter.com/festival or write to:
Stony Brook Film Festival, Stoller Center for the Arts,
rm 2032, SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794-5425

Entry Deadline: April 1, 2000

2000 Stony Brook Film Festival
July 19-29

Congratulations to the 1999 Stony Brook Film Festival Winners!
"The Woiting Gome," Director Ken Liotti • "Row Your Boot," Director Solloce Mitchell
"God, Sex & Apple Pie," Director Paul Leaf, Producer/Writer/Actor Jerome Courshon
"More," Director Mork Osbourne • "The Fishmonger's Doughter," Director Coroline Sox
"Roberta," Director Eric Mandelbaum • "Rudy Blue," Director John Werner

2000 Call for Entries



LONG ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL

18th Annual Film/Video Festival

Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center
May 18th-21st, 2000

Call or Write for Entry Forms (Due 4/1/00)
Christopher Cooke, Director
Long Island Film Festival
c/o P.O. Box 13243
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Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $40 (features); $25 shorts (35 min. or less). Contact: NFF, Jill Goode, Artistic Director, Box 688, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012; (508) 325-6274; fax: (212) 708-1211; burkhart@interport.net; www.nantucketfilmfestival.org

NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, NY. Deadline: March 3. Annual int'l electronic arts fest presented in association w/ Lincoln Center Festival 2000. All genres & platforms of any length will be considered: video art, doc, computer animation, interactive (CD-ROM, etc.). All videos chosen will be projected in the Film Society's Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center. There are no categories or awards. All work must be originally produced and/or postproduced in video/computer. Average of 40 works presented in 14 programs; coverage in *NY Times* & *Village Voice*, as well as out-of-town & int'l coverage. Submitted works should be recent (w/in past two years); NY premieres preferred. Formats: 1/2", 3/4", Beta SP, CD-ROM, Digital. Preview on 3/4", 1/2" (NTSC, PAL), CD-ROM (for pc). Do not submit preview in Beta. Do not send masters; tapes not returned. Entry form can be printed from web site. No entry fee. Contact: NYVF, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; fax: 875-5636; sbensman@filmlinc.com; www.filmlinc.com

NOT STILL ART FESTIVAL, April 28-29, NY. Deadline: March 15. Fest invites media artists working in abstract & non-narrative electronic motion imaging, in conjunction w/ music/sound design, to submit programs under 10 min. in length. Fest is interested in work made w/ all technologies, the primary criterion being the aesthetic of the electronic screen. Programs made on the "Paik/Abe Synthesizer", from the early '70s to present, sought for a special screening. Screenings will tour & be broadcast. Formats & preview: 3/4", Hi 8, S-VHS. For appli. & guidelines, see web site. Contact: NSA, Box 496, Cherry Valley, NY 13320; fax: (607) 264-3476; nsa_fest@hotmail.com; www.improvart.com/nsa/

OUTFEST 2000, July 6-16, CA. Deadline: March 31. Held at the Directors Guild of America theater & nearby venues, fest seeks films & videos by &/or about gay men, lesbians, bisexuals & transgenders. Open to narrative & doc features & shorts. Cats: feature, doc, short. Twelve awards ranging from $500 to $1,500. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10-$25. Contact: OUTFEST, 1125 McCadden Place, Ste. 235, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (323) 960-9200; fax: 960-2397; outfest@outfest.org; www.outfest.org

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, June, CA. Deadline: Late Feb. Founded in 1976, this is one of world's largest & oldest events of its kind. Many works premiered in fest go on to be programmed or distributed nat'lly & int'lly. Rough-cuts accepted for preview if submitted on 1/2". Entries must be SF Bay Area premieres. Awards: Frameline Award, Audience Award. Dockers Khakis 1st Feature Award ($10,000). Fest produced by Frameline, nonprofit arts organization dedicated to lesbian & gay media arts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Contact: SFILGFF, Jennifer Morris, Co-Director, Frameline, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650; fax: 861-1404; info@frameline.org; www.frameline.org

SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, July 20-Aug. 3, CA. Deadline: March 15. Estab. in 1980, noncompetitive fest showcases new ind. American Jewish-subject cinema & diverse selection of foreign films. Fest presents dramatic, doc, experimental & animated shorts & features about Jewish history, culture & identity. Filmmakers need not be Jewish; films selected by subject. 35-40 films showcased each yr. Cats: experimental, short, animation, feature, doc, Jewish. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SFJFF, Janis Plotkin, Director, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-0556; fax: (510) 548-0536; jewishfilm@sfjff.org; www.sfjff.org

SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 18-June 11, WA. Deadline: March 3. Founded in 1974, fest is the largest film festival in the U.S., presenting more than 200 features & 80+ shorts to an audience of over 140,000 filmgoers each year. Fest is one of five N. American film festivals in which presentation will qualify a film w/out distribution for submission to the Independent Spirit Awards. Fest hosts a competition for Best American Ind. Film, Best New Director (Int'l) & Best Short Film in addition to the audience-based Golden Space Needle Awards given in cats of feature film, director, actress, actor, doc & shorts. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (30 min. or less); $50 (31 min. or more). Contact: SIFF, 911 Pine Street, Ste. 607, Seattle, WA 98101; (206) 464-5830; fax: 264-7919; entry@seattlefilm.com; www.seattlefilm.com

TAHOE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 6-10, CA.. Deadline: Jan. 14. 4th annual fest showcases nat'l & int'l incl workshops, panel discussions, formals & parties. Accepting features, shorts, docs, animation, children's program, student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, Digital. Preview on VHS (NTSC only.) Entry fees: $15-40. Contact: TIFF, Hilary Kleger or Peter Fain, Program Directors, Box 7588, Tahoe City, CA 96145; shipping: 405 N. Lake Blvd., Ste. 205, Tahoe City, CA 96145; (530) 583-FEST; fax: 581-5474; info@tahoefilmfestival.org; www.tahoefilmfestival.org

U.S. INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 7-8, IL. Deadline: March 1. Founded in 1968, this is the world's leading competition devoted exclusively to business, TV, industrial & info productions. Entries are grouped w/in 68 cats or 11 production techniques. Productions must have been created during the 18 months preceding deadline. Formats: 1/2" & 3/4". Entry fees: $125-$200 (depending on length). Contact: USIFVF, 841 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126; (630) 834-7773; fax: 834-5565; filmfestinfo@filmfestawards.com; www.filmfestawards.com

USA FILM FESTIVAL, April 27-May 4, TX. Deadline: Early March. Fest has 3 major sections: noncompetitive feature section; Nat'l Short Film & Video Competition & KidFilm. Feature section incl. premieres of new films, new works from ind. & emerging filmmakers. Short film & video competition showcases new & significant U.S. work. Entries should be under 60 min., completed after 1/1/99. Awards incl. $1,000 prizes for narrative, nonfiction, animation & exp. Plus $250 Jury Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $40. Contact: USAFF, Alonso Duralde, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 821-6300; fax: 821-6364; www.usafilmfestival.com

VIDEOGRAPHER AWARDS, TX. Deadline March 17. Event is an awards program to honor talented individuals & companies in the video production industry. Awards given for video produc-

tion & special events video. Numerous cats incl. educational, student, special events, legal & sports. Accepting entries starting Feb. 1. Formats: VHS, S-VHS, Betacam, Betacam SP, CD-ROM (PC) & DVD. Entry fee: $37.50. Entry forms & info avail. on web site. Contact: Videographer Awards, 2214 Michigan, Ste. E, Arlington, TX 76013; (817) 459-0448; fax: 795-4949; info@videoawards.com; www.videoawards.com

CORRECTION: The web site for the **WILLIAMSBURG BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL** is: www.wbff.org

Foreign

ALGARVE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 18-28, Portugal. Deadline: March 15. 28th annual fest is longest-running event of its kind held in Portugal. Films must be produced 1997 or later & be no longer than 30 min. Cat: short. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: AIFF, Carlos Manuel, Box 8091, 1801 Lisboa Codex, Portugal; 011 351 21 851 3615; fax: 351 21 852 1150; algarvefilmfest@mail.telepac.pt; www.algarvefilmfest.com

BANFF TELEVISION FESTIVAL, June 11-16, Canada. Deadline: Feb. 21. Fest blends three components: an int'l program competition, a conference for TV professionals w/ important resource people & an informal environment in which to develop business relationships. Cats incl. animation, arts docs, history & biography programs, short dramas & sports programs. Entries must be made for TV, w/ those in English or French having their TV premiere after March of preceding year. Producers of programs judged best in each of 14 cats will receive "Rockies" sculptures. Grand Prize Award given to the "Best of the Festival." On demand screening facilities for TV programs invited or submitted to fest, in or out of competition. Audience est. at 1,000. Formats: 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $250. Contact: BTF, Pat Ferns, 1516 Railway Ave, Canmore, Alberta, Canada TIW 1P6; (403) 678-9260; fax: 678-9269; info@banfftvfest.com; www.banfftvfest.com

CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 12-23, France. Deadline: March 15. Largest int'l film fest, attended by over 30,000 professionals, stars, directors, distributors, buyers & journalists. Round-the-clock screenings, parties, ceremonies, press conferences & one of world's largest film markets. Selection committee, appointed by Admin. Board, chooses entries for Official Competition (about 20 films) & Un Certain Regard section (about 20 films). Films must have been made w/in prior 12 mo., released only in country of origin & not entered in other fests. Official component consists of 3 sections: 1) In Competition, for features & shorts competing for major awards; 2) special Out of Competition accepts features ineligible for competition (e.g. by previous winners of Palme d'Or); 3) Un Certain Regard, noncompetitive section for films of int'l quality that do not qualify for competition, films by new directors, etc; 4) Cinefondation, new competition (since '98) to present & promote short & medium-length fiction or animation films, final year student films, or first productions which show artistic qualities that deserve to be encouraged. Film market administered separately, screens film in main venue & local theater. Parallel sections incl. Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Director's Fortnight), main sidebar for new talent, sponsored by Assoc. of French Film Directors (deadline mid-April); La Semaine de la Critique (Int'l Critic's Week), 1st or 2nd features & docs chosen by French Film Critics Union (selections must be completed w/in 12 mos prior to fest). Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short), Camera d'Or (best first film in any section) & Cinefondation (best final year student film). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Cannes, 99 boulevard Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; 011 33 1 45 61 66 00; fax: 33 1 45 61 97 60. For press accreditation, contact: Christine Aime, 011 33 1 45 61 66 08; fax: 33 1 45 61 97 61. Cannes Film Market, contact: Jerome Paillard, 99 bd Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; 011 33 1 45 61 66 09, fax: 33 1 45 61 97 59. Add'l info: Quinzaine des Realisateurs, Societe des Realisateurs de Films, 14 rue Alexandre Parodi, 75010 Paris, France; 011 33 1 44 89 99 99, fax: 33 1 44 89 99 60. Semaine Internationale de la Critique, attn: Eva Roelens, 52 rue Labrouste, 75015 Paris, France; 011 33 1 56 08 18 88; fax: 33 1 56 08 18 28; critique@club.internet.fr

CINEMATECA URUGUAYA, April 15-30, Uruguay. Deadline: Feb. 15. 18th annual fest devoted to short & feature-length, doc, fiction, experimental, Latin American & int'l films, w/ purpose of promoting film quality & human & conceptual values. Ind. fest aims at being frame for meetings & discussions of regional projects & of mutual interest. Fest has 4 sections: Int'l Full Length Film Show; Int'l Doc & Experimental Film Show; Info Show; Espacio Uruguay. Films should be subtitled, have Spanish version, or have a list of texts or dialogues translated into Spanish. Films wishing to compete should have been finished after Jan. 1, 1998. Deadline for reception of prints: March 15, (contact before shipping). Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS (PAL or NTSC), U-Matic PAL. Preview on VHS. Contact: CU, Lorenzo Carnelli, 1311 (11200) Montevideo, Montevideo, Uruguay; fax: 011 598 2 409-4572; cinemuy@chasque.apc.org; www.cinemateca.org.uy

FUKOUKA ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL, July, Japan. Deadline: March 31. Competitive fest accepts feature films made by Asian or Asian American directors &/or featuring Asian subject matter. Cats: feature, shorts, doc, animation. Awards: non-cash prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: FAFF, Shu Maeda, Hirako bldg., 4th fl., 2-4-31, Diamyo, Fukuoka, Japan 810-0041; 011 81 92 733-0949; fax: 81 92 733-0948; faff@gol.com; www.shukosha.com/faff/

HAMBURG INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, June 13-18, Germany. Deadlines: March 1. 16 (Int'l Short Film Competition & No Budget Competition); April 1 (Three min. Quickie). 16th annual fest is a forum for presenting diversity of int'l short films & a meeting place for filmmakers from home & abroad. Awards: Hamburg Short Film Award (main award), No Budget Award (jury award), Francois Ode Award (jury award), Audience Awards (each cat). Theme of 2000 Three-min. Quickie is "My favorite song." Length: under 20 min. (exceptions possible); except Three-min. Quickie. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, Betacam, U-Matic, VHS & S-VHS. Previews on VHS. If previews are not in German or English, please enclose text list. VHS not returned. Contact: HISFF, KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg e.V., IHSFF, Friedensaliee 7, D-22765, Hamburg, Germany; 011 49 40 398 26 122; fax: 49 40 398 26 123; kfa@shortfilm.com; www.shortfilm.com

LAON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, March 27-April 6, France. Deadline: Feb. 11. Oldest French fest for youth, attracting more than 30,000 spectators

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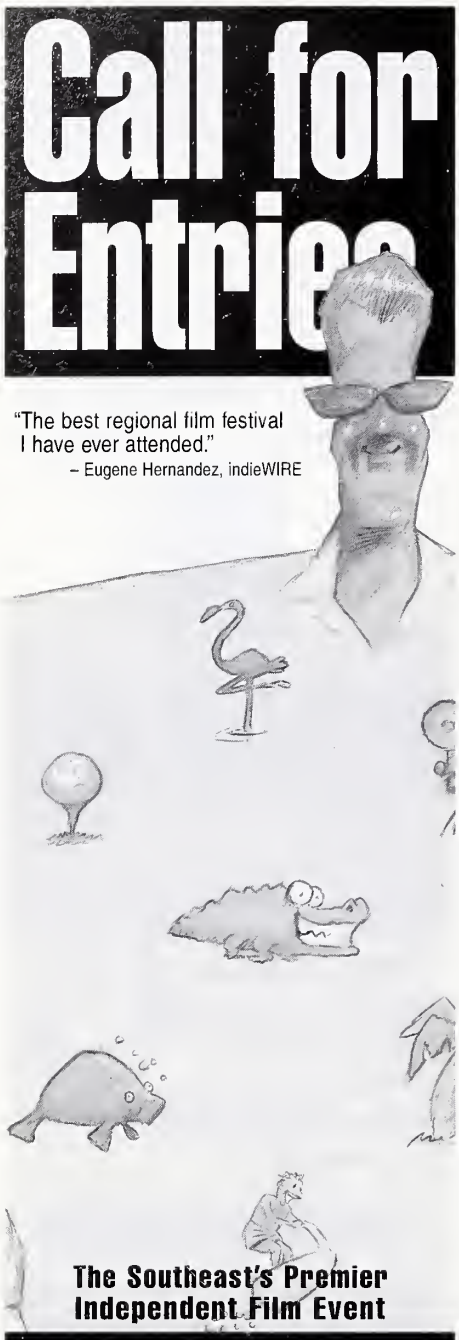
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& well known by French distribs. Prize of Laon is 30,000 FF (approx. $4,626) to the French distributor. Looking for high quality feature films likely to be of interest to children or young adults (fiction or animation). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. For more info contact: LIFFYP, Florence Dupont, 9 rue du Bourg, B.P. 526, 02001 Laon Cedex, France; 011 33 3 23 79 39 37/33 3 23 79 39 26; fax: 33 3 23 79 39 32; festival.cinema.laon@wanadoo.fr; festival.cinema.laon@wanadoo.fr; www.aisne.com/festival_cinema_jeune_public

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 19-Aug. 6, Australia. Deadlines: March 3 (shorts); April 7 (features). FIAPF-recognized fest celebrates 49th anniv. as one of Australia's largest & its oldest fest. Eclectic mix of indie work, w/ special interest in feature docs & shorts. Substantial program of new Aussie cinema. Int'l short film competition features cash prizes in 7 cats: Grand Prix City of Melbourne Award for Best Film ($5,000) & $2,000 for best of in each cat: Australian, experimental, animated, doc & fiction. Open to films of all kinds, except training & ads. Films 30 min. or less eligible for Int'l Short Film Competition; films over 60 min. eligible for noncompetitive feature program. Video & super 8 productions considered for "out-of-competition" screenings. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. & not screened in Melbourne or broadcast on Australian TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: MIFF, Sandra Sdraulig, Exec. Director, 207 Johnston St., Box 2206, Fitzroy 3065, Australia; 011 61 3 417 2011; fax: 61 3 417 3804; miff@netspace.net.au; www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au

PESARO FILM FESTIVAL, June 21-29, Italy. Deadline: March 31. 36th annual fest's "New Cinema" program incl. features, shorts, fiction, nonfiction, experimental & animation. Production requirements: Italian premiere, completion after Jan. 1, 1999. Send a VHS tape, any standard. If not English or French spoken or subtitled, enclose dialogue list in either language. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, U-matic, Betacam. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: PFF, Fondazione Pesaro Nuovo Cinema, Via Villafranca 20, 00185, Rome, Italy; 011 39 06 4456643/491156; fax: 39 06 491163; pesarofilmfest@mclink.it; www.comune.pesaro.ps.it

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOCS MARKET & VUE SUR LES DOCS FESTIVAL, June 21-24, France. Deadline: March 27. 11th annual market brings together ind. producers, distributors, commissioning editors, heads of TV programming depts & buyers from all over the world. Attended last year by some 695 companies from 34 countries, 213 buyers & commissioning editors & 94 TV channels. Market provides opportunities for project development & meeting partners w/ Side-by-Side sessions (one-on-one meetings w/ commissioning editors for advice on projects). Contact: SSDM, 23 rue François Simon, 13003 Marseille, France; 011 33 4 95 04 44 80; fax: 33 4 91 84 38 34; sunnyside@wanadoo.fr; www.film-fest-marseilles.com

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL, June 9-23, Australia. Deadline: Feb. 18. Australia's main fest, this major FIAPF-recognized event is one of world's oldest (47 years old) & leading int'l showcase for new work screening around 175 films. Noncompetitive int'l program incl. features & docs; experimental works; retros; competition for Aussie shorts; forums w/ visiting directors. All Aussie distributors & TV buyers attend. Fest has enthusiastic & loyal audience & is excellent opportunity for publicity & access to Aussie markets. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers; results have good deal of influence w/ Aussie distribs. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 months & be Aussie premieres. Entry open to features, docs & short films & videos from around the world. Awards for Australian-produced short films (under 60 min.) & docs only. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm & Beta SP PAL. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). No entry fee. Filmmakers wishing their tapes returned must pay a fee of $20 ($13 U.S.) to cover return cost. Contact: SFF, Jenny Neighbour, Box 950, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia; 011 61 2 9660-3844; fax: 61 2 9692-8793; info@sydfilm-fest.com.au; www.sydfilm-fest.com.au

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, Japan. Deadline: March 15. 9th annual event is the largest lesbian & gay fest in Asia drawing 6,000 viewers to 40 films in 1999. Fest is a major event in the Tokyo cultural scene & receives nat'l & int'l media coverage. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, 1/2" (NTSC only, no PAL or SECAM). Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). No entry fee. Contact: TLGFF, 5-24-16 #601 Nakano, Nakano-ku,Tokyo, Japan 164-0001; 011 81 353 80 5760; fax: 81 353 80 5767; lgff@tokyo.office.ne.jp; www.gender.ne.jp/L-GFF/

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, May 4-11, Canada. Deadline: Feb.15. Now in its 8th year, event is the 2nd largest Jewish film fest in N. America. It is devoted to chronicling diversity of Jewish life & experiences from around the world. Well-supported by the Toronto Jewish community, fest had attendance of 12,000 last year. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta-SP, VHS (Secam, PAL). No entry fee. Contact: TJFF, Shlomo Schwartzberg, Director of Programming, 33 Prince Arthur Ave., 2nd fl., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1B2; (416) 324-8226; fax: 324-8668; tjff@interlog.com; www.tjff.com

TURIN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY FILMS, April 13-19. Italy. Deadline: Early Feb. Now in 15th yr, one of longest-running int'l gay & lesbian events. Entries should be by lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender filmmakers or address related themes & issues. About 170 titles. Competition section divided between 3 juries: doc, long feature & short feature. Panorama section features new int'l productions. Award named after late fest co-founder, Ottavio Mai, presented to best screenplay for short. Cats: doc, feature, short.. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: TIFLGF, Angelo Acerbi, Head programmer, Piazza San Carlo 161, 10123 Torino, Italy; 011 390 11 534 888; fax: 390 11 535 796; glfilmfest@assioma.com; www.space.tin.it/cinema/gminerba

YORKTON SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. May 11-14, Canada. Deadline: Feb. 10. Event is the longest running short film fest in N. America & home of the coveted Golden Sheaf Award. Awards will be presented in 4 int'l, 17 nat'l, and 9 craft categories as well as cash awards, jury awards & best overall. Fest provides a relaxed atmosphere for participants to network w/ buyers, producers, distributors, broadcasters & funders. Formats: Betacam/Betacam SP, 1/2" VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $75 (nat'l); $100 (int'l). Contact: YSFVF, 49 Smith St. E., Yorkton, SK, S3N 0H4, Canada; (306) 782-7077; fax: 782-1550; info@yorktonshortfilm.org; wwwyorktonshortfilm.org

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Competitions

AMERICAN SCREENWRITERS ASSOCIATION is sponsoring a new contest entitled "Screenwriting from the Soul," dedicated to finding "the most heartwarming, soulful story of the year." Grand Prize: $500 script consultation & dinner w/ Richard Kreviolin, USC Screenwriting Professor & author of "Screenwriting from the Soul." Entry fee: $25 (ASA members); $35 (non-members); Deadline: Feb. 29. Contact: ASA, Box 12860, Cincinnati, OH 45212; (513) 731-9212; johnj@asascreenwriters.com; www.asascreenwriters.com

FIRST TEEN IMPROV MOVIE CONTEST: Join moviemakers in NY, MA IL & IA to develop art of improvising a movie in one or two days. Use our MOVIExperience format or your own curriculum. Cash prizes from Second City & others. Include w/ entry form, your storyboard, visual proof that teens are behind the camera & a check for $50 to Group Creativity Projects (nonprofit), 1029 Federal, Belchertown, MA 01007. Dave Shepherd, Coordinator: (413) 256-1991.

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Est. to give you experience, feedback, direction etc. as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer or development company sit up & take notice about a script you have already written or one you intend to write. You may enter a one-page synopsis of a screenplay you already have written, or a screenplay you intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, valued at $299, plus a free Script Detail of the screenplay of your choice valued at $150, both compliments of LA's The Source World Wide Scriptservice. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entry-form.html

SCRIPTAPALOOZA is a company that not only champions the talented writer, but takes that writer beyond just prize money. Creates golden opportunities for winning writers to possibly be discovered, get representation, have their script optioned, or to outright sell it. Early bird deadline (postmarked by Jan. 2): $35; first deadline (March 1 postmark): $40; final deadline (April 15 postmark): $45. For rules, guidelines & application: www.scriptapalooza.com; Scriptapalooza, 7775 Sunset Blvd. ,PMB # 200, Hollywood, CA 90046.

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. Ten entries chosen as winners; top two receive $100, other eight receive $50, plus any revenue received from rental/sales. Max. length: 6 min. Entry fee: $20; add $10 for each additional entry on same cassette (max. 3 entries per entrant). All entries must include entry form. Tapes & boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS or DV. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Include SASE if want tapes returned. Deadline: Feb. 5. Contact: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010; www.videoshorts.com

Conferences

INT'L FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE announces Open Day, Jan. 14 in San Francisco, a full day of panels & networking opportunities w/ key int'l film financiers & buyers. This is only day of IFFCON w/ registration open to public. Topics include: "Pitch Perfect: How To Sell Your Idea" & "Funding the Future: the Digital Wave." Registration fee: $150. Info & registration: (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com (see page 46)

THE THIRD SCHOOL OF SOUND, a four-day symposium exploring use of sound in screen production, will be held in London from April 12-15. SoS will take a comprehensive look at structure & function of the soundtrack, leading you along new paths through creative processes—writing, editing, sound design, music composition—that culminate in synthesis of sound & moving image. Topics will range from practical to aesthetic to metaphysical & will incl. concepts for integrating sound & image, human sound perception, sound as metaphor. Program will place a special emphasis on voice & dialogue, a topic often omitted from creative strategies used in sound design. For info or inclusion on our mailing list, tel/fax: 011 44 171 323 3437; Epesound@aol.com; www.schoolofsound.co.uk

Films • Tapes Wanted

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for 2000 video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resumé, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for independent shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, New York, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

CABLE SHOWCASE SEEKS PRODUCTIONS, Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, program director, 8103 Sandy Spring Rd., Laurel, MD 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

CIN(E)-POETRY FESTIVAL accepting short poetry or literary films, videos, documentaries & multimedia pieces for catalog & upcoming poetry video film festival. Request entry form: Cin(E)-Poetry, 934 Brannan St., 2 fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-9261; fax: 552-9261; poetry@nationalpoetry.org

D.FILM Digital Film Festival [www.dfilm.com] is a traveling showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. D.FILM was official digital film program at 1999 Cannes Film Festival. Look for it in your city & visit web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game.

DOCUMENTAL: doc & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka (310) 306-7330.

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 99/00 SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

EXHIBITION SPACE: Sleeping Girl Productions, a nonprofit production company in Chicago, is about to open a 100+ seat film theater avail. for rent to any Illinois filmmaker for a night, weekend, or extended run. For more info, write or call: Jason Tugman, Sleeping Girl Productions, 839 W. Sheridan # 502, Chicago, IL 60613; (773) 472-0525.

FOOTAGE WANTED: Tigress Productions seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

FUNNY SHORTS requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & pros welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returned. Send VHS entries to: *Funny Shorts*, c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184.

GOWANUS ARTS EXCHANGE is accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for the Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre or subject matter. Deadline: Ongoing. Also presenting a Children's Film Festival & looking for films that children will enjoy. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send tapes & SASE to: The Ind. Film & Video Series, Gowanus Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018; info@thegowanus.org

INDEPENDENT LENS is a PBS series designed to showcase works of independent film & videomakers, presenting doc, short action & fiction works. All genres & lengths, fiction, nonfiction, doc, or live short action works are welcome. All lengths (30 min, 60 min, 90 min, etc.) accepted, but PBS has standard length requirements which may necessitate edits. You must have (E&O) insurance, be closed-captioned & comply w/ PBS underwriting guidelines. We look forward to seeing your independent work! When sending in your submission, please include: Exact length of program, all production credits & all packaging elements, brief description, names of current program funders. Deadline: Feb. 15. Send VHS copies to: Caryn Gutierrez Ginsberg, PBS Ind. Lens, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 739-5010; www.pbs.org

NETBROADCASTER.COM seeks films & videos for streaming on the net. Expose your feature or short to int'l audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, comedy, animation, docs, experimental, music videos, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all! Netbroadcaster.com launched last fall. Site hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of largest ISPs on the net: films@alchemy.net

NEW VENUE [www.newvenue.com] showcases movies made specifically for Internet & offers filmmakers a guide to optimizing video for web. Submit a digital flick for Y2K season now: QuickTime or Flash, 5 MB or less (15 min or less for streaming).

OUTDOOR SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL. Late April, AZ. Deadline: Feb. 18. Fest is one night outdoor event. Entries

should be no longer than 10 min. All genres, but shorts only. Awards are in name only. Incl. SASE for tape return. Format is VHS only. No entry fee. Contact: ASUAMSFVF, John D. Spiak, ASU Art Museum, 10th St. & Mill Ave., Tempe, AZ 85287; (480) 965-2787; fax: 965-5254; spiak@asu.edu; www.asuam.fa.asu.edu/filmfest/main.htm

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an on-going series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s & 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org

TAG-TV is accepting short films, videos & animations to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com for more info.

TV/HOME VIDEO production company is seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on a new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films in VHS or S-VHS format to: Salt City Productions/Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13320; SCVP@aol.com

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042; Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone & SASE to: Videospace, General submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hr. weekly show w/ videos followed by info on makers. Send VHS/S-VHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

ZAO, a new exhibition space, currently accepting short film/videos of any genre/subject. Send VHS tape w/ bio & SASE to: Tahari, ZAO, 1114 6th Ave, New York, NY 10036, Attn: Lisa Schroeder.

ZOIE FILMS INTERNET FESTIVAL, March. Deadline: Feb. 2nd annual fest will present approx. 30-50 films during the year & showcases more than 60 filmmakers. New domestic & foreign films, fiction films & docs, animation, experimental works, children's programs & film shorts will be incl. in fest. Awards incl. Zoie Star Award for Best Picture (domestic & foreign) People's Choice Awards & Certificates for various placements. Contact: Zoie Films, 539 Salem Woods Dr., Marietta, GA 30067; (404) 816-0602; fax: 560-6777; www.zoiefilms.com/filmfestxprt.htm

Publications

1998 LIBRARY OF AFRICAN CINEMA: resource guide released by California Newsreel. Includes 40 African produced feature films, docs, & TV productions. 48-page guide avail. at no charge from: California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax: 621-6522; newsreel@ix.netcom.com; www.newsreel.org

6th INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts avail. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers incl. "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Fiction & Non-Fiction for TV." Send $46 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4506; fax: 399-4507; artfilm@ sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & U.S. Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, LAVA, 124 Washington Pl., New York, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: The Essential Resource for Making Independent Film, Video, & New Media. Completely updated for 1999. Includes nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media funding sources, call: (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org/html/forms/mediamaker.html

NEH 1998 Annual Report is now avail. Contains brief descriptions of Endowment programs as well as a complete listing of all Endowment grants for fiscal year 1998. Contact: NEH 1998 Annual Report, Rm 401, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20506; info@neh.gov; www.neh.gov

THE SQUEALER, quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel puts upstate NY spin on media-related subjects. Once a year, *The Squealer* publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed info on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions $15/ year. Contact: Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; www.freenet.buffalo.edu/sigs/links/squeaky/org.htm

Smile for the Camera!

Here's the routine: you see a listing for a new film with a definite part for you, send off your resumé and headshot. Over and over again . . . Now there's an easier and cheaper way to get yourself out there, through **8x10Glossy.com** The site is run by 20-20 INCITE productions, a self-described NY/CT "floating community theater." For a small fee, you can get your headshot online with video excerpts from performances. Free member benefits include email address, a listing of your expertise, and use of the site's bulletin boards. Free listings in non-acting categories—filmmakers, editors, cinematographers, fine artists—are also available.





Resources • Funds

8x10GLOSSY.COM: Free Internet listing & email address for all actors technicians & organizations. On-line artists' co-op offers free listing in their Directory & Searchable Database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of Bulletin Board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

ARTS LINK COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS allow U.S. artists and arts organizations to undertake projects overseas with colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe with grants from $2,500-$10,000. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. Deadline: Appl. must be postmarked by Jan. 18, 2000. Contact: Arts Link, CEC International Partners, 12 West 31 St., New York, NY 10001; artslink@cecip.org

ARTS LINK FUND FOR U.S. ARTISTS AT INT'L FESTIVALS & EXHIBITIONS makes available $1.1 million annually to support performing artists invited to int'l festivals & support U.S. representation at major int'l contempory visual arts exhibits. Deadlines: Applications must be postmarked by Jan. 14, May 1, & Sept. 1, 2000 Contact: Arts Link, CEC Int'l Partners, 12 West 31St., New York, NY 10001; artslink@cecip.org

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CA CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & to pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps., travel & similar activities necessary to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ CA Council for the Humanities staff. Deadlines: Feb. 1 & Aug. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste. 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA (213) 623-5993; in San Diego (619) 232-4020; www.calhum.org

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ super 8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio incl. Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, New York, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

EASTMAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Colleges & Univs. in U.S. & Canada which offer a BA/BS/BFA, MA/MA/MFA in film or film production may nominate two students for $5,000 scholarships. Deadline: June 15. For nomination form, write to Betsy A. McLane, Int'l Documentary Association, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrolment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Program Dir., Experimental TV Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants from $5,000-$50,000 for production/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, combine artistry & intellectual clarity, can be completed within one year of award & have broadcast potential. Deadline: April 4. Contact: Nat'l Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500 x. 205.

IDA/DAVID L. WOLPER STUDENT DOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD is a $1,000 honorarium presented annually to recognize exceptional achievement in nonfiction film & video at university level. Films & videos must be produced by registered students & completed between 1/1/99 & 4/30/00. Winner is honored at 15th Annual IDA Awards Gala on Oct. 29, has film screened at Docufest on Oct. 30 & receives $1,000 certificate from Eastman Kodak for film stock. Deadline: June 15. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, L.A., CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on on-going basis. No finished works. New initiative, DV'99, announced, where ITVS seeks 30 & 60 min. digital video projects shot w/ budgets of up to $125,000. New productions or works-in-progress okay. Deadline: Oct. 15, 2000. For all queries, contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION provides funding for independent productions of new Asian American programs for public television. NAATA will give awards ranging from $20,000 to $50,000 for production only. Deadline: June 4 (receipt, not postmark). NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St. 2 fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; mediafund@naatanet.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES' Division of Public Programs provides grants for the planning, scripting & production of film, television & digital media projects that address humanities themes. Appl. deadline: Feb. 1. (planning, scripting & production grants only). Contact: NEH, (202) 606-826; publicpgms@neh.org; download appl. guidelines from: www.neh.gov/html/guidelin/pub_prog.html

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANTIES: Summer Seminars & Institutes for college and university teachers. Seminars incl. 15 participants working in collaboration w/



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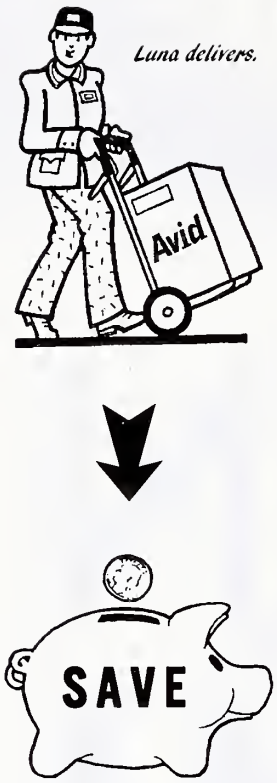
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one or two leading scholars. Institutes provide intensive collaborative study of texts, historical periods & ideas to undergrad teaching in the humanities. Seminars also avail. for K-12 teachers teaching in public, private & church-affiliated schools. Deadline: March 1. Detailed info & applic. materials are avail. from project directors. Contact: (202) 606-8463; sem-inst@neh.gov; www.neh.gov

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distrib. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ a searchable Industry Directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 unique visitors each month. All articles & listings on the sites are free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS' Individual Artists Program: production funds avail. for video, radio, audio, installation work & computer-based art. Max. award: $25,000. Artists must be sponsored by nonprofit org. Deadline: March 1. For additional info. contact Don Palmer, Director, Individual Artists Program, NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7063; dpalmer@nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus is on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

OCTOBER EVENT GRANTS: NY Council for the Humanities celebrates State Humanities Month (Oct. '00) a celebration of history, culture & human imagination w/ awards for local programming which reflect diversity of humanities institutions & subjects. Deadline: May 1. Contact: NYCH, 150 Broadway, Ste. 1700, NY, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131; fax: 233-4607; hum@echonyc.com; www.culturefront.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No applic. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadlines: Feb. 1, May 15 & Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; www.pacificpioneerfund.org

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE w/ 55¢ stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues w/ goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of prod.; film & video projects in preproduction or distribution stages only. Grants range from $3,000-$8,000. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Vivianna Bianchi, Program Officer, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, NY, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND for writers & editors w/ AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

ROY W. DEAN VIDEO GRANT open for submissions. Grant pkg. worth over $50,000 in products & services and restricted to docs. Deadline: Jan. 31. Appl. & guidelines avail. on web site. Contact: Kelsie Chance, Dir. of Grant Development, Studio Film & Tape, Attn: Roy W. Dean Video Grant, 630 9th Ave., 8 fl., New York, NY 10036; (212) 977-9330; (800) 444-9330; www.sftweb.com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. Contact: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postproduction services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

US-MEXICO FUND FOR CULTURE, sponsored/funded by Nat'l Fund For Culture & the Arts, Bancomer Cultural Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation & U.S.-Mexico Commission for Educational & Cultural Exchange & Mex-Am Cultural Foundation, announces binational artist proposals. Deadline: April 15. Contact: US-Mexico Fund For Culture, Londres 16, P.B., Col. Juarez, 06600, Mexico, D.F. Mexico; (525) 592-5386; fax: 566-8071; usmexcult@laneta.apc.org; www.fideicomisomexusa.org.mx

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation & Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

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CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. MARCH 1 FOR MAY ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $65/NONMEMBERS; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $90/NONMEMBERS. INCLUDE VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED & ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCL. CARD TYPE (VISA/MC/AMEX); CARD #; NAME ON CARD; EXP. DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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FOR RENT: SONY 3-CHIP DIGITAL CAMERA (DCR-VX1000). Also available: mic, light & tripod. Negotiable rates for both short & long-term rentals. Please call (718) 284-2645.

FOR SALE: Panasonic AGEZ1 miniDV camcorder, 3-chip. Batteries. $1,800. Call (203) 226-8313.

NYC AVID FOR RENT: Media Composer 1000, AVR 77 offline & online, our editor or yours. Graphics too. Plenty of storage, 24 hour access, perfect location at B'way & Houston. We'll beat any price. (212) 253-9296; TheDocTank@aol.com

SOHO AUDIO RENTALS: Time code DATs, RF diversity mics, playback systems, pkgs. Great rates, great equipment & great service. Discounts for AIVF members. Larry (212) 226-2429; sohoaudio@earthlink.net

VIDEO DECKS/EDIT SYSTEMS/CAMERAS FOR RENT: I deliver! Beta-SP Deck (Sony UVW-1800) $150/day, $450/wk. DV deck $150/day. S-VHS offline edit system $450/wk. Sony DVCAM 3-chip camera $125/day. Lights, tripods, mics & mixers. David (212) 362-1056.

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A+ DISTRIBUTOR since 1985 invites producers to submit quality programs on VHS w/ SASE for distributor consideration. Mail to Chip Taylor Communications; 15 Spollett Dr., Derry, NH 03038; www.chiptaylor.com

ANGELCITIVIDEO seeks films and videos of all types for distribution (323) 461-4086.

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS: Award-winning distributor of outstanding videos because of outstanding producers. Join our collection of titles on disabilities, mental health, aging, nursing, psychosocial issues, children & teen issues. For educational/health markets. Leslie Kussmann, 5 Powderhouse Lane, Sherborn, MA 01770; (508) 651-2963; www.aquariusproductions.com

ATA TRADING CORP., actively & successfully distributing independent products for over 50 years, seeks new programming of all types for worldwide distribution into all markets. Contact: (212) 594-6460; fax: 594-6461.

INTERNET DISTRIBUTOR seeks quality independent films for home video & other sales. We offer producers a significant piece of the gross, based on rights pkg. Check our web site for details & submission info: www.indie-underground.com

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THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distrib, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Ste. 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

Freelancers

35MM/16MM PROD. PKG w/ cinematographer. Complete studio truck w/ DP's own Arri 35BL, 16SR, HMIs, dolly, jib crane, lighting, grip, Nagra . . . more. Ideal 1-source for the low-budget feature! Call Tom today for booking. (201) 741-4367.

A LEGACY PRODUCTIONS, renowned documentarians for HBO et al., now offers video production/post services. Beta/Digital/Hi-8 formats & state-of-art nonlinear editing at ridiculously fair rates. Steve (212) 807-6264; mani@interport.net

AATON CAMERA PKG. Absolutely perfect for independent features. Top of the line XTR Prod w/ S16, time code video, the works! Exp DP w/ strong lighting & prod skills wants to collaborate in telling your story. Andy (212) 501-7862; circa@interport.net

ACCLAIMED & UNUSUAL instrumental band can provide music for your next project. Contact "Magonia" for demo: (781) 932-4677; boygirl@mediaone.net; www.magonia.com

ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER/CONTROLLER: Experience in both corporate & nonprofit sectors. Hold MBA in Marketing & Accounting. Freelance work sought. Sam Sagenkahn (212) 481-3576.

ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTR prod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: *Dog Run*, *Strays*, *Working Space/Working Light*. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com

AVID SUITE: AVR 77 with or without experienced editor. Available for long term or short term projects. Comfortable room with large windows, sofa and 24 hr. access. Please contact André at Viceroy Films: (212) 367-3730.

AWARD-WINNING EDITOR, w/ Avid and Beta SP facility. Features, shorts, doc, music videos, educational, industrials, demos. Trilingual: Spanish, English, Catalan. Nuria Olive-Belles (212) 627-9256.

BETA SP & DVCAM Videographer with both cameras, lights, monitors, mics & wireless. Very portable, lightweight & I'm fast. Experience includes: documentaries, industrials, fundraisers & fashion. Please call John Kelleran (212) 334-3851.

BETA SP VIDEOGRAPHER, skilled in everything from exterior handheld to Rembrandt interior lighting styles, seeking interesting projects to shoot. Has attractive Sony Betacam SP, cool sets of lights & sensitive microphones. Willing to travel. Yitzhak Gol (718) 591-2760.

BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography w/ many feature & short film credits. Owns 35 Arri BL3, Super 16/16 Aaton, HMIs, Tungsten & dolly w/ tracks. Awards at Sundance & Raindance. Call for quotes & reel at (212) 226-8417; www.dp-brendanflynt.com

BROADCAST ENGINEER, 15 yrs. exp. Has Betacam SP location package. 3-chip mini DV. Looking to work on projects. Michael (212) 691-1311.

CAMERAPERSON: Visual storyteller loves to collaborate, explore diverse styles & formats. Brings passion & productivity to your shoot. Award-winner w/ latest Super/ Std.16 Aaton XTR prod. package. Todd (718) 222-9277; wacass@concentric.net

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ reg/S-16mm Aaton, video-tap, lighting gear & more. Digital video too. Collaborations in features, shorts, docs, music videos & other compelling visions. Kevin Skvorak, reel & rates (718) 782-9179; kevskvk@inx.net

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ Arri 16SR package & 35IIC, w/ over 15 years in the industry. Credits incl. 2nd unit, FX & experimental. Looking for interesting projects. Will travel. Theo (212) 774-4157; pager: (213) 707-6195.

COMPOSER: Experienced, award-winning Yale conservatory grad writes affordable music in any style that will enhance your project. Save money without compromising creativity. Full service digital recording studio. FREE demo CD/initial consultation/rough sketch. Call Joe Rubenstein; (212) 242-2691; joe56@earthlink.net

COMPOSER: MFA (NYU/Tisch) and extensive experience with theater, dance & Sundance filmmakers. Will work with any budget in styles ranging from classical to drum & bass to African-Hungarian jazz. Low budget services include digital studio & live cello. Contact Raul Rothblatt (212) 254-0155; deblatt@interport.net

COMPOSER: Perfect music for your project. Orchestral to techno—you name it! Credits incl. NFL, PBS, Sundance, Absolut. Bach. of Music, Eastman School. Quentin Chiappetta (718) 752-9194; (917) 721-0058; qchiap@el.net

COMPOSER Miriam Cutler loves to collaborate with filmmakers—features, docs, animation, even circus. Highlights: 1997 Sundance winner: *Licensed to Kill*; 1998 Peabody winner *The Castro*; 1999 POV: *Double Life of Ernesto Gomez Gomez* & much more; (323) 664-1807; email: mircut@pacificnet.net

COMPOSER: Original music for your film or video project. Credits include NYU film projects and CD. Will work with any budget. Complete digital studio. NYC area. Call Ian O'Brien: (201) 432-4705; iobrien@bellatlantic.net

COMPOSER Award-winning, experienced, will creatively score your film/TV/video project in any musical style. Extensive credits incl. nat'lly released features, TV dramas, documentaries, animation, on Networks, MTV, Disney, PBS. Columbia MA in composition; full digital studio; affordable. Demo reel available. Elliot Sokolov (212) 721-3218; Elliotsoko@aol.com

COMPOSERS-PRODUCERS for film, TV, video, all media. Award-winning original music, rock, orchestral, techno, jazz. No project too large, too small. Free VHS demo. Info: (800) 349-SOUND; juliajohn@soundmechanix.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ lighting director background. Specialty films my specialty. Can give your film that unique "look." 16mm & 35mm packages avail. Call Charles for reel: (212) 295-7878.

DIGITAL VIDEO Videographer/D.P., with Canon XL-1 videocam; prefer documentaries, shorts and less traditional projects; documentation for dance, music and performance. Alan Roth (718) 218-8065; alanroth@mail.com

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Award-winning, exp., looking for interesting projects. Credits incl. features, docs & commercials in the U.S., Europe & Israel. Own complete Aaton Super 16 pkg & lights. Call Adam for reel. (212) 932-8255 or (917) 794-8226.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for interesting features, shorts, ind. projects, etc. Credits incl. features, commercials, industrials, short films, music videos. Aaton 16/S-16 pkg avail. Abe (718) 263-0010.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Owner 16mm Aaton, plus 35mm non-sync & hand-crank cameras. Experimental background; creative look. Shooting credits incl.: Features, shorts, promos, commercials & music videos. New York-based, will travel. Carolyn (718) 930-7969.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ Beta SP production pkg., Sony VX-1000 digital camera, Bolex 16mm & super 8 cameras. Also lighting/grip equip. & wireless mics. Looking for interesting projects. Experienced. Reel available. Alan (212) 260-7748.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ complete Arri-Zeiss 16mm pkg. Lots of indie film experience. Features, shorts and music videos. Save money and get a great looking film. Willing to travel. Rates are flexible and I work quickly. Matthew: (914) 439-5459 or (617) 244-6730.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ own 35mm sync sound Arriflex BLII avail. Beautiful reel, affordable rates. Crew on standby. Work incl. several features, shorts, music videos. Travel no problem. Dave (718) 230-1207; page: (917) 953-1117.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ awards, talent, savvy & experience. Own Aaton 16mm/super 16mm pkg., 35mm package available. Call for my reel. Bob (212) 989-7992.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY with Arri BL 3, Aaton XTR Prod S16/16mm, and Canon XL1 camera package is ready to shoot your project. Call Jay Silver at (718) 383-1325 for a copy of reel. hihosliver@earthlink.net

DP w/ full postproduction support. Experienced film/video DP w/ 16:9 digital & 16mm film cameras, lighting/sound gear & complete nonlinear editing services. Call (212) 868-0028 Derek Wan, H.K.S.C. for reel & low "shoot & post" bundle rates.

EDITOR WITH AVID: Conscientious advocate of the Invisible Cut. Comfy West Village space. AVR77, 144 gigs, Beta, VHS, DV. MC/Visa. Bill G. (212) 243-1343; gcomvid@usa.net

EDITOR AVAILABLE; experienced award-winning Avid editor available to work on interesting and innovative pieces. Will work dirt cheap for the chance to be challenged (docs, shorts, features). Call Kevin (212) 591-0589.

EDITOR; Award-winning director/editor, whose last film was selected by Cannes, seeks editing projects. Avid available. (212) 352-4476.

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

EXPERIENCED CINEMATOGRAPHER with crew & equipment; 16mm & 35mm. Short films & features. Vincent (212) 995-0573.

FILM CONSULTANT: Award-winning writer/director (PBS, MTV, feature credits) acquisitions executive for Infinity Films, offers advice to filmmakers, critiques scripts & films. Reasonable rates. Nick Taylor (212) 414-5441.

JOHN BASKO: Doc cameraman w/ extensive int'l network exp. Crisis in Kosovo; Civil wars in Beirut, El Salvador, Nicaragua; Tiananmen Square student uprising. Equip. maintained by Sony. (718) 278-7869; fax: 278-6830; Johnbasko@aol.com

LOCATION SOUND: Over 20 yrs sound exp. w/ time code Nagra & DAT, quality mics. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. Harvey & Fred Edwards, (518) 677-5720; edfilms@worldnet.att.net

MEDIA 100 NONLINEAR EDITING: Latest software & FX. Beta SP & digital camera packages, full lighting & audio support gear. Steadicam & jib avail. Award-winning works. Reasonable rates. Pro Video Productions, Inc. (516) 366-2100; pvpprods@aol.com

MUSIC MUSIC MUSIC! We have it! Original music & scoring. Stock avail. for temps. Digital sound design too. Free VHS demo. Info: (800) 349-SOUND; juliajohn@soundmechanix.com

Opportunities • Gigs

ADVENTUROUS PRODUCTION/CAMERA ASSISTANT wanted for documentary video productions. No pay. Fax letter of interest: (203) 226-2396; lisa131@erols.com

ANGELCITI FILM MARKET Call for entries: Accepting submissions of films, videos & screenplays of all types for Market in LA and Festival Tour (323) 461-4256.

ASSISTANT OR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR of Television Production is sought to teach hands-on video production classes, to direct the TV production programs, and to oversee the upgrading of the TV production facilities. Leadership capabilities are essential. Must be well-versed in digital production & digital postproduction techniques & technologies. Duties will incl. advising on graduate thesis productions. A Master's degree is required. Rank & salary will depend on professional & teaching achievements. Deadline for submission of applications is Jan. 15, 2000. Send a cover letter, resumé, and three letters of reference to Jennifer Morcone, Manager of Faculty Services, Boston Univ., College of Comm., 640 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 353-8023; fax: 353-3405; jmorcone@bu.edu; www.bu/edu/com

NY-BASED Suitcase Productions seeking experienced Avid editors and assistant editors for factual programs, magazine series and travel programs. Send reels and resumés to: 307 7th Ave., Ste. 1607, NY, NY 10001, Attn: David.

TENURE TRACK POSITION, assistant professor rank, full-time. Salary commensurate w/ experience. MFA or equivalent req. Some teaching at university level preferred. Active screening record & high level of professional activity relative to rank expected. Must be able to teach all aspects of 16mm film production in a dept. rooted in the experimental tradition w/ emphasis on narrative & doc short films. Must be able to teach film history & theory. Experience w/ video, digital editing & audio design req. Student advising, departmental & univ. committee participation & broad engagement w/ the program's curriculum development is expected. University Maryland Baltimore College is a research univ. w/ a Visual Arts dept. comprised of 30 full-time faculty, associate staff & adjunct faculty & approx. 650 undergrad & 25 graduate MFA students. Begin Aug. 17, 2000. UMBC will conduct interviews at the CAA National Conference in Feb. Send letter of intent, C.V., 3 letters of reference, S.A.S.E & VHS tape of films postmarked by Jan. 15, 2000 to Vin Grabill, Interim Chair, c/o Film Search Committee, Visual Arts Dept., Rm. 111 Fine Arts Building, UMBC, 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250. UMBC is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer & welcomes applications from minorities, women & disabled persons.

WANTED: FREELANCE VIDEO CAMERAPERSON for corporate & broadcast Betacam work. Mostly interviews & B-roll for newsmagazine programming. Must have good lighting skills & ability to work well w/ a variety of clients. Contact Dan: (212) 594-0322 &/or send a resumé & reel (VHS) to: WTV, 208 W. 30th St, #208, NY, NY 10001.

WELL-ESTABLISHED freelance camera group in NYC seeking professional cameramen and soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

Preproduction • Development

BUDGETS/INVESTOR PACKAGE Experienced Line Producer will prepare script breakdowns, shooting schedules & detailed budgets. Movie Magic equipped. MC, Visa, Amex. Indie rates negotiable. Mark (212) 340-1243.

INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION COMPANY offers production services and personnel including directors, producers and videographers with DV camera package in the U.S. and Europe. Pahni Inc. (718) 243-0775 or visit www.pahni.com

LOOKING FOR FILMMAKERS: B Commercial is an up-and-coming production company specializing in DV pre through post. We offer intelligent, creative and technical support for your vision, as well as low rates for NYC. Whether you are making a feature or a short, a documentary or fiction, B Commercial is your one-stop production team. Call for rates and information (201) 805-4170; (917) 593-9117; Bmercial@aol.com

PRO SCREENPLAY CONSULTANT for major studios, indies & private clients. Full analysis, commercial assessment. Great rates. Act Four Screenplays: (212) 567-8820 (M-F, 9-6 EST). Actfour4@aol.com; www.members.aol.com/Actfour4/

PRODUCTION OFFICE: West 85th in NYC, fully wired all office equip, Beta, 3/4" dubbing, animation. Avid room as needed. Short or long-term. Dan (212) 501-7878 x. 222.

SU-CITY PICTURES: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic: We provide screenplay/treatment/synopsis/films-in-progress insight/analysis. Studio credentials include: Miramax & Warner Bros. Competitive rates. Brochure: (212) 219-9224; www.su-city-pictures.com

POSTPRODUCTION

16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., #404, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771, or eves: (847) 541-8488.

16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound-transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable rates. (212) 925-1500.

16MM SOUND MIX only $100/hr. Interlocked 16mm picture & tracks mixed to 16 or 35mm fullcoat. 16mm/35mm post services: picture & sound editorial, ADR, interlock screening, 16mm mag xfers (.06/ft), 16mm edgecoding (.015/ft). Call Tom (201) 741-4367.

AVID 8000 & 1000 SUITES: Pleasant, friendly, comfortable Upper West Side location. Online & offline, AVR 77; reasonable & affordable rates. Tech support provided. (212) 595-5002; (718) 885-0955.

AVID 8000: Why rent an Avid Media Composer 400 when you can get an 8000 for less? Avid Media Composer 8000; real-time FX; 4 channel pro-tools; 24 hr access. Seriously unbeatable prices!! (212) 375-0785; (212) 982-7658.

AVID EDITOR; A dozen feature credits. New Media Composer w/ AVR 77 & offline rez. Beta SP, DAT, extra drives, Pro-tools editing & mixing, and your Avid or mine. Fast and easy to get along with. Credit cards accepted. Drina (212) 561-0829.

AVID EDITOR with own system: editing, training, skilled editor, lowest prices in NYC. Third Eye Productions (212) 472-3315.

AVID IN BROOKLYN, or delivered to your hood. Call everyone else and then call us! We'll work with you! Avid 1000, AVR 77. Lowest prices around! Your editors or ours. No project too small or too big. Call Alex (718) 855-0216.

BOSTON MEDIA 100 for rent. Unbeatable indie rates. Top of the line system; broadcast quality; 32 gigs; Beta SP deck; tech support. Office w/ 24 hr access, full kitchen & beautiful garden. Award-winning editors. Astrea Films (617) 666-5122.

BRODSKY & TREADWAY Film-to-tape masters. Reversal only. Regular 8mm, super 8, or archival 16mm to 1" or Betacam SP. We love early B&W & Kodachrome. Scene-by-scene only. Correct frame rates. For appt. call (978) 948-7985.

MEDIA 100 EDITING Broadcast quality, newest software. Huge storage & RAM. Betacam, 3/4", all DV formats, S-VHS, Hi-8 . . . Great location, friendly environment & low rates, tech support, talented editors & FX artists available: (212) 868-0028.

OUTPOST Digital Productions: 3 rooms, New Iced Avid Media Composer V-8 including AfterEffects on Ice, and 2 Media100 V-5.0. Broadcast quality. Beta, DV, Hi8, VHS. Lots of drive space: great editors or self-operate. Low rates, free coffee. Williamsburg (718) 599-2385; www.outpostvideo.com

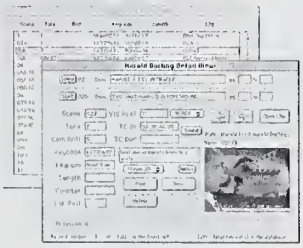
PRODUCER WITH PRODUCTION OFFICE looking for low budget features to produce in New York. Will provide budgeting/scheduling, production personnel. Video, shorts and feature experience. Call Val at (212) 295-7878 or email me: zelda212@netscape.net

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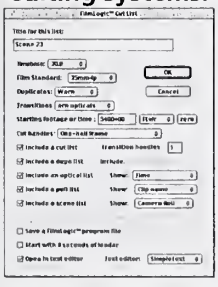
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FilmLogic is designed for filmmakers who are shooting 35mm or 16mm film and want to edit electronically while finishing on film. Not another non-linear editing system, FilmLogic is an application which works with desktop digital video non-linear editing systems.



Version 2.0 provides support for Avid, Premiere, Final Cut Pro, Media 100 and EditDV. FilmLogic tracks all the elements of the finished film in its on-line database and outputs negative cut lists, optical lists, pull lists, dupe lists, and more. For more information, visit the web-site at www.filmlogic.com, or call Focal Point Systems, Inc. in the USA toll-free at 877-209-7458.

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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Unless otherwise indicated, events take place at the AIVF office in New York City, 304 Hudson (@ Spring). RSVPs are required for all events. For more information or to RSVP, please visit www.aivf.org or our Events Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Details of the followings events were being confirmed at presstime.

January Events

AIVF AFTER HOURS
EXTENDED LIBRARY HOURS

When: **Every 1st Wed.**, 6-9 p.m. (Jan. 5, Feb. 2)
Cost: free; open to members & nonmembers

By popular demand, AIVF now offers extended Filmmakers Resource Library hours once a month. The AIVF library houses hundreds of titles, from essential directories (*Hollywood Creative Directory*, *CPB Directory*, *Blu-Book*, *NYPG*) to film histories and biographies, to back issues of trade mags (*Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter*) and film publications (*Res*, *Filmmaker*, *MovieMaker*, and 20 years of *The Independent*), as well as unique reference materials. After Hours is also the perfect time to pick up the most recent AIVF Member Benefits list or to ask questions about your membership.

MEET & GREET
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

State of the Arts NYSCA

When: call for details
Cost: free to members/$10 general public

The New York State Council on the Arts was one of the first arts councils in the U.S. and from its earliest days has supported film and video. Long recognized for its leadership role, NYSCA takes particular care in its support of the media arts and assists virtually every aspect of film, video, radio, audio, installation work and web-based/computer projects—from project development to completion; through distribution and even preservation. For more on NYSCA, see December's "Funder FAQ."

DOCUMENTARY DIALOGUES:
WHOSE STORY? A DISCUSSION OF OBJECTIVITY

When: Wed., **Jan 12**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: free (AIVF members only)

Documentary Dialogues is a bi-monthly discussion group comprising AIVF nonfiction filmmakers. Topics encompass theoretical and philosophical perspectives on and approaches to independent film- and videomaking. This series facilitates the exchange of ideas and is a great way to meet new collaborators.

Is nonfiction work true? objective? Is a news piece more true than an advocacy piece? Or less? How do we meter how much of what we see in a work is reflection of external reality, and how much has been defracted by its documentation? As makers of nonfiction, what are our options to code works in such a way that elusive truth is identified as such—without weighing down the work's form? We'll tackle these questions during this group discussion.

If you would like to bring an illustrative clip on VHS (series rules: under 3 minutes, and you may not show your own work), please call Michelle Coe at x235 by January 10.

IN BRIEF:
HEALTH INSURANCE LOWDOWN

When: Thursday, **Jan. 13**, 6:30-8 p.m.
Cost: free; open to members & nonmembers

Roy Assad of RBA Insurance Strategies will conduct an information session on AIVF's new HIP Group Plan. Take advantage of this detailed overview describing this affordable, comprehensive health plan.

February Events

UP CLOSE: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS
ARTHUR DONG

When: Mon. **Feb 7**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: call for details
Cost: $10/members; $20 general public

Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Arthur Dong has combined the art of the visual medium with an investigation of social issues in his many documentaries. With a focus on Asian American concerns and gay and lesbian issues, Dong's productions have garnered over 100 international and national awards, including the Peabody Award, an Oscar nomination, multiple Emmy nominations, and two GLAAD Media Awards. He has received grants from prestigious organizations, including, the Rockefeller Foundation, the NEA, ITVS, and the Paul Robeson Fund. In addition, he has produced for PBS. Dong will discuss and show excerpts from work including *Licensed to Kill*, *Coming Out Under Fire*, and *Sewing Woman*. (For more info: www.deepfocusproductions.com)

IN BRIEF:
TAXES FOR INDEPENDENTS

When: Tues. **Feb 8**, 6:30-8:30p.m.
Cost: $10/members; $20 general public

Join CPAs Martin Bell (Bell & Co) and Paul Iacobello (Sciarrino & Co.) for a workshop on filing your taxes as an independent contractor or a small business. Following a general Q&A, participants may opt for a five minute session with either CPA to discuss more specific concerns. Bell and Iacobello are participants in the AIVF Trade Discount Program and offer discounts to members on a year-round basis. Here is your chance to forge new relationships!



MEET & GREET:
THE SHOOTING GALLERY

When: Tues., **Feb 15**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free to members/$10 general public

The Shooting Gallery was created as an unparalleled resource for filmmakers and distributes the films it produces and acquires both domestically and internationally. Under its Gun For Hire subsidiary, the company has 400,000 square feet of production space throughout

North America, offering a range of production and post-production services to the film, television, commercial video and new media arenas. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn more about this independent studio and meet development and acquisitions staff.

ADVOCACY FORUM:
TEACH HARLEM
A DIGITAL DIVIDE WORKSHOP

When: Feb. 24-25; call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 for additional details.

As part of the Teach Harlem project, AIVF along with Libraries for the Future, CUNY, and The Harlem Partnership, present a panel and discussion event addressing new technology issues of particular concern to independent media producers. Tune in for more details!

MEET YOUR MAKER:
PEGI VAIL & MELVIN ESTRELLA

When: Tues., Feb 29th, 7-9 p.m.
Cost: $10 (AIVF members only)

Meet Your Maker is a series of peer workshops allowing filmmakers to share resources and learn from one another. The featured artist shares her/his business & creative strategies in completing a specific project from development through exhibition.



Husband and wife producing team Pegi Vail (dir.) and Melvin Estrella (cinematographer) will present a case study of *The Dodgers Symphony*. The 30 minute film, featuring the all-volunteer band that played for the Brooklyn Dodgers, won a CINE Golden Eagle, was broadcast on 13/WNET and the IFP/North Independents In Flight series on Northwest Airlines, and screened in museums and film festivals in the U.S. and abroad.

AIVF co-sponsors

SELECT SCREENINGS
AT THE WALTER READE THEATRE

Presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. For more info, contact (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

Due to increased activity in the Los Angeles area we are looking for enthusiatic members to start a salon. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 for an application.

See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of each month, 7 pm
Where: Yarbrough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Contact: Rebecca Millner, (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE, (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: Pat Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota, (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org or Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Manhattan, NY
When: 3rd Monday of each month, 5-8 pm
Where: Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard Street (1 block south of Houston, 2nd Ave stop on F)
Contact: Joe Sullivan, (212) 242-3396

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou, (212) 904-1133; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675; mediaart@connix.com

Newport, RI:
When: Second Monday of each month
Contact: George Marshall, (401) 861-4445; flicksart@aol.com, www.film-festival.org

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 575-2020

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; www.members.tripod.com/rochaivf/index.html

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811 or espinosa@electriciti.com

Seattle, WA:
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; or visit www.speakeasy.org/blackchair/

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli, (813) 690-4416; rmondar1@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Monday of each month from 6-8 pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline, (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

Youngstown, OH:
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, artbyrd@mindspring.com, or visit www.cboss.com/flickclique

Don't miss the Film Society's **Frederick Wiseman Retrospective:** Jan 28-Feb 24. Check out the works of this master of direct cinema, including the U.S. premiere of his latest film *Belfast, Maine*, plus panel discussions. Tickets are just $6.50 for AIVF members.

THE FIFTH NIGHT
SCREENPLAY READING & SHORT FILM SERIES

This acclaimed weekly program presents shorts followed by readings of feature screenplays. AIVF members receive discounted admission to the new series, The Late Late 5th Night Cine Club. For info: (212) 529-9329.

NEW FILMMAKERS

This on-going series screens shorts and features every Wednesday evening at Anthology Film Archives, NYC. For more info or to submit your film visit www.newfilmmakers.com.

The *American Movie* Premiere a Strike!

The New York premiere of *American Movie* was a smash success! AIVF members and film enthusiasts turned out in force for the film and AIVF's rowdy post-screening party at NY's hippest bowling alley. Many thanks to all who made the night so much fun.

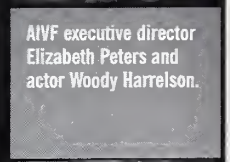


American Movie creative team: (l to r) *Coven* director Mark Borchardt, co-producer Jim McKay, director/producer Chris Smith, producer Sarah Price, and co-producer Michael Stipe.



Actor/director Frank Whaley with director/AIVF board member Richard Linklater





AIVF executive director Elizabeth Peters and actor Woody Harrelson.



Producer/AIVF Board VP Jim McKay bowls a strike *his* way.

PHOTOS: TOM LEGOFF

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AIVF MEMBER BENEFITS & TRADE DISCOUNTS

Point persons, additional contact information & discount codes are available to members at the AIVF website www.aivf.org/membership/mem_ben.html (note: you must provide your AIVF membership number to log on) or by leaving your mailing address and membership number at (212) 807-1400 x.506. If you're not yet a member, why not join today? This information was last updated 12/99 and is subject to change without notice.

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AIVF OFFERS

Discounts on Publications

Get special prices on *The AIVF Self-Distribution Toolkit*, *The AIVF Exhibitors Guide*, *The AIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals*, *The AIVF Guide to Distributors*, and *The Next Step*. Back issues of *The Independent Film and Video Monthly* and other useful publications also available. See cernterfold card to order.

AIVF Mailing List

Reach a core group of folks who appreciate independent media! Printed on Avery labels for one-time use; AIVF member rate $450 (national list, approx. 4,500 records) or customize by region for $100 plus 10¢/record.

Classified ads in *The Independent*

The most-used resource for independents! Member rate: up to 240 characters (including spaces and punctuation): $25/issue; 240-480 characters: $45; 480-720 characters: $60, with discounts for ads running 5 or more times.

Display ads in *The Independent*

15% off book rate for our Business & Nonprofit members:; call for a media kit. Not available to individual members.

AIVF Conference Room

Conference room at our SoHo office, seats up to 20 with VHS video and 16mm projection. $30/hour for members only. Members only; call to reserve.

Short-term Desk Rental

Need a touch-down point during your trip to New York? Rent a desk and voice mail box at our SoHo office. Short-term only (one week & under); business hours 10-6 M-F (voicemail accessible anytime). Photo- copies & fax avail. at additional charge. $50/day for members only.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Production Insurance

Alliance Brokerage Corp.
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Marvin S. Kaplan Insurance Agency, Inc.
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Health Insurance

Jeff Bader (New York, NY)
Jeff Bader is an insurance broker eager to talk to you about various health plans that are available.

RBA Insurance Strategies (New York, NY)
Offers a true group discount with HIP for all New York-based members. It affords a discount of 20-30% with benefits not usually available to individuals.

Teigit/CIGNA HealthCare
Teigit administers CIGNA HealthCare plan. National coverage varies from state by state.

Dental Insurance

Teigit/CIGNA
CIGNA offers a separate dental plan and premium.

Stock & Expendibles

Film Emporium (New York, NY)
10% discount off Kodak and Ilford 16mm & 35mm film, and video and audiotape in all professional brands and formats. Complimentary consultations on production insurance.

Rafik (New York, NY)
25% discounts on used cassettes over $100, 10% on single invoices over $100 for video services, editing, duplication, film-to-tape transfers, and foreign video conversion.

Studio Film and Tape (Los Angeles, CA)
10% discount on new Fuji 16mm film, Ilford 16mm b/w film, Maxwell videotape in all formats, all editorial supplies including leader, mag stock, splicing tape, and computer data storage media.

Studio Film and Tape (Chicago, IL)
10% discount on new Fuji film and Ilford B/W film.

Studio Film and Tape (New York, NY)
5% discount on film stock and all videotape stock available in new and Ecotape.

Production Resources

Downtown Community Television Center (New York, NY)
10-20% discount on DCTV video workshops and seminars; low-fee Avid & DVC camera rental for nonprofit projects.

East Light Productions (Baltimore, MD)
30% discount on Avid editing or negotiable for projects. 10% discount on Beta SP shoots, Sony 600 (switchable 16x9 format), or Sony 70IS camera package.

Edgewood Motion Picture and Video (Rutland, VT)
25% off production (Betacam SP, 3/4", ARRI 16mm and 35mm), editing (Avid Media Composer 1000, Betacam SP/ 3/4" on-line) and audio mix (digital audio facilities).

Film Friends (Miami, FL; New York, NY)
20% discount on extensive range of equipment rentals: camera, video, lighting, sound, grip, and Steadicam.

Guerillaquip (New York, NY)
15% discount on all grip and lighting equipment rentals.

Hello World Communications (New York, NY)
10% discount for walkies, audio, and video packages, dubbing, and our Discreet Logic (nonlinear edit system/offline and online).

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Island Media International (New York, NY)
50% discount off all corporate rates on Avid editing services: Avid, Betacam SP, DV cam-digital, film to tape and tape to film transfers, camera packages.

Lichtenstein Creative Media (New York, NY)
15% discount on mini-DV and DVcam dubs to Beta and equipment rental.

Mill Valley Film Group (Mill Valley, CA)
Independent documentary producers, established and award-winning, provide free consultation when you rent from us with 35% discounts on Media 100SX, Media 100Nubus, Avid 400s, VHS cuts only system, and Beta SP production package.

Open Studios (Vestal, NY)
10-40% off digital audio/video editing, production and field shooting. (Includes audio postproduction, music, SFX, sound design, surround sound automated mixing, full video services with Betacam and D3 etc).

The Post Office at Filmmaker's Collaborative (New York, NY)
20-35% off rates for Avid Media Composer, off-line editing, and digital camera rental.

Soho Audio (New York, NY)
10% discount on all daily equipment rentals. Deeper discounts on longer term rentals.

PrimaLux Video (New York, NY)
10% or more discounts (nonprofits encouraged) on services including: studio production facilities, remote production packages, and postproduction.

Texcam (Houston, TX)
Up to 15% discount on film camera packages (16mm and 35mm).

Video Decks To Go (New York, NY)
10% discount on first time Beta-SP deck rentals of one week or more.

Yellow Cat Productions (Washington, DC)
15% off of a full day video shoot with a 2 person crew; 15% off any Avid editing in charming townhouse on Capitol Hill.

Labs & Transfer Houses

Bee Harris Productions (Mt Vernon, NY)
10% discount on all editing services and facilities (Avid, Beta SP, 3/4", 16mm, 35mm, transfers, dubs). Producers of films, commercials, docs, corporate, and educational videos.

CinePost (Atlanta, GA)
20% discount on negative film processing (normally .15/foot); 20% on film-to-video transfers (Rank Cintel; normally $200/hr).

DuArt Film and Video (New York, NY)
Negotiable discounts on color negative developing, workprinting, blow-ups from 16mm and S16mm to 35mm, and titles.

OK TV, Inc. (New York, NY)
10% on all services, including S16/16/35 dailies; sound transfers; titles and special effects; digital film-to-tape transfers; video editing.

Rafik
See Stock & Expendibles

Editing & Postproduction

Aries Post (Hollywood, CA)
10% discount off rate card for all video postproduction services including: Beta Sp, Hi8, 3/4", SVHS, and DVC to Beta SP analog A/B editing and Avid nonlinear suite.

Bee Harris Productions
See Labs & Transfer Houses

Diva Edit (New York, NY)
10% discount on all editing services and facilities: Avid 1000 and Avid 800 with film composer.

Downtown Community Television Center
See Production Resources

DV8Video, Inc. (New York, NY)
10% discount on all Avid editing services and duplication, Betacam SP, Digital Betacam, DVC Pro, 3/4", Hi8, and VHS.

East Light Productions
See Production Resources

Edgewood Motion Picture and Video
See Production Resources

GLC Productions (New York, NY)
10-30% discount off book rate for audio postproduction services. ADR, sound design, SFX/foley, mix, ISDN phone patch.

Harmonic Ranch (New York, NY)
Discounts on sound editing, music, mixing, and sound design.

Hello World Communications
See Production Resources

Island Media International
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Lichtenstein Creative Media
See Production Resources

Media Loft (New York, NY)
5% discount on 3/4" VHS and interformat editing, titling, dubbing, special effects, Hi-8, Amiga computer, still photography, slides, and photos to tape, S-8.

Mercer Street Sound (New York, NY)
50% discount from corporate rate for audio postproduction services.

Mill Valley Film Group
See Production Resources

Moondance Productions (New York, NY)
10-30% discount (depending on hours) on all editing services: Avid, AVR-77, Media Log. All formats: Beta SP, DVC Pro, DV cam, 3/4", VHS, D-7, Hi8.

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film and video makers. AIVF is supported by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, artist profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities, programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by The Independent.

We also publish a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check The Independent or visit the salon section of the AIVF website. If you're interested in starting a salon in your area, ask for our startup kit!

ADVOCACY

Over the past 25 years AIVF has been outspoken in our efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our community. Recent activities have included a successful campaign to restore the short documentary Oscar category, and to keep DBS providers accountable to the public. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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The Post Office at Filmmaker's Collaborative
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PrimaLux Video
See Production Resources

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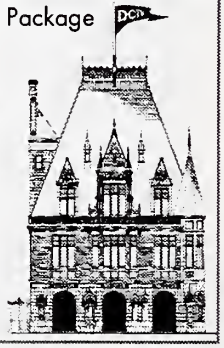
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Virgin Moon Post (Ventura, CA)
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Yellow Cat Productions
See Production Resources

Other Production Services

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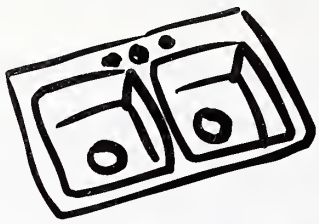
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"Just after the presidential election last November, Anne-Imelda Radice, acting chair of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), turned down grants recommended for funding from the Media Arts Fund (MAF).... The three vetoed grants, totalling $17,500, were all for gay and lesbian film festivals."

Catherine Saalfield, 1993

"I'm standing in front of George [Stephanopolous] and [James] Carville. Perot has just made some speech. They're doing these wonderful imitations of Perot. They're getting off on it, and they're giggling away and whispering little things into each other's ears.... So I'm filming them, and every once in a while I look at this wall [of press cameramen]. And the wall is looking straight ahead, like it isn't happening. Because nobody's come out of the door. That's what their job is—getting Clinton coming out of the door. Then it all gets put to tape, and goes out into the world, and everybody sees Clinton that day coming through a door."

D.A. Pennebaker, 1993



"What do you need to go online? First, you need a computer with a modem and a telephone line. While most everyone is familiar with computers and phone connections, the modem is an exotic piece of equipment."

Luke Matthew Hones, 1994

"By replacing one-way broadcast and cable transmission with interactive dial-up access to programming stored on video servers [and] eliminating channel capacity constraints, many of the barriers to utilizing television as a distribution medium will fall."

Clay Gordon, 1994

"NEA chair Jane Alexander devastated the country's media arts community last October when she announced the agency was suspending seven categories within its Media Arts, Music, and Presenting & Commissioning programs. Individual media artists and small arts organizations were at the eye of the storm, since their primary link to the NEA is through various regrant programs . . . which have been eliminated indefinitely."

Mary Esbjornson, 1995

"It is encouraging that SAG has taken steps toward providing a flexible arrangement for 'no-budget' filmmakers. The Guild must protect its members, but must also take into account the changing realities of the marketplace. After all, the new independent film scene has resulted in the success and release of low-budget films often featuring the union's own membership."

Robert L. Seigel, 1995

"No serious player in this business would have financed a movie about this little girl."

Todd Solondz, 1996

"I think Slamdance is exciting, inevitable, necessary, and good. 'DIY' is the whole idea behind indie filmmaking and it doesn't stop when the film is done."

Steven Soderbergh, 1997

"The key is not to panic when a) your DP, who is supposed to shoot in three weeks, quits for a higher-paying job; b) you catch a stomach virus and have to go to the hospital for dehydration two weeks before shooting; c) you break up with your boyfriend during the sound mix; or d) your apartment is completely cleaned out by thieves during editing."

Adrienne Shelly, 1997

"Ten years ago, the biggest thing about independent film was how difficult it was to see. Once of the objectives of launching [Sundance] was to build a platform for it, help legitimate it for theatrical release. We've created a monster, in a way."

Geoffrey Gilmore, 1998

"I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist.... My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings.... Thus I make my vow of chastity."

Lars von Trier & Thomas Vinterberg, 1999

— COMPILED BY EMILY BOBROW

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Paul Power, Managing Editor. 23rd November, 1999.



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AIVF at 25

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of AIVF, The Independent *initiates a new column for the year 2000, "In Retrospect." Every month on this page, we'll revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from* The Independent Gazette, *a one issue magazine published in 1976, and from the January issues of* The Independent Film & Video Monthly *from its launch in 1980 to the present.*

"Low-budget films are usually shot on location, and shooting at exterior locations is a real hassle. At different times [when shooting *Not a Pretty Picture*] we found ourselves surrounded by hundreds of people we weren't prepared to handle, in the middle of a knife fight, and on a major bus route. Shooting was halted by the arrival of a number of fire engines, and at another time, by a Mr. Softee truck that wouldn't go away."

Martha Coolidge, 1976

"Hopefully, this article will pinpoint the main components of the current video systems. The first group of equipment is the 'portapaks'....One is a 1/2" reel-to-reel update of the original AV/AVC 3400 black-and-white portapak. They also make a 3/4" video cassette portapak. Both decks record and play in color."

Alan Miller, 1976

"I was turned down for starting funds [for *Word is Out*] by every conceivable private, religious, political, and government agency and foundation. In 1972, no one wanted to go near a 'queer' film."

Peter Adair, 1980

"As the ultra-right takes command of the American political process, we must contemplate four years of a Hollywood president. So we are quickly learning that... with the installation of Ronald Reagan and his legions, the very term 'alternative' becomes 'oppositional.' "

DeeDee Halleck, 1981

"If television brought us some version of Vietnam, it has, by and large, kept Latin America from us.... Countries such as El Salvador do make it onto the screen, but usually only if their governments are dependent on US aid.... It has been left largely to independent filmmakers to notice, investigate, analyze, and document these conflicts."

Susan Linfield, 1984

> *"The creation of a place in our culture for media that is alternative without being marginal, imbued with values distinct from mass entertainment while still attracting an audience, is the paradoxical purpose of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, now in its tenth year."* *Debra Goldman, 1985*

"Last fall the CIA sent a purchase order to Icarus Films for one dozen films and videotapes . . . Most are documentaries critical of U.S. foreign policy—and CIA involvement in Central America.... Are these independent works becoming a source for intelligence gathering by the very agencies they criticize?"

Renee Tajima, 1985

"The cultural boycott [of South Africa] continues despite independent producers who place the value of a film festival over the value of peoples' lives. It is precisely because culture plays such a critical role in the politics of apartheid that makes the cultural boycott and support for it so vital."

Charlayne Haynes, 1986

"Few women are as yet able to gain access to producing media. Cheap media may hold out the promise of greater access and immediacy of production for women—particularly for women without access to professional schools and high-tech equipment."

Sherry Millner, 1987



"There's trouble in paradise. When the contracts for [The Learning Channel's series] *Declarations of Independents* arrived in the mail, a number of producers were miffed.... 'Nobody [at TLC] ever said they would also distribute—for *free*—our programming to [PBS].' "

Patricia Thomson, 1987

"One of the shortcomings of commercial television's AIDS coverage lies in its insistence on speaking to one audience—the *you* addressed is presumed to be white, middle-cass, heterosexual, and healthy, grouped in cozy, stable families. Those responsible for these television programs completely ignore the possibility that many of those watching may be struggling with AIDS on a more immediate level."

Timothy Landers, 1988

"'What I do is I tell history, but as a story. I don't want to tell it didactically or analytically, or just politically. I clearly have political sympathies and ideas and points of view, but I don't wish the engines of my films to be driven by them."

Ken Burns, 1991

"The media's performance has to be analyzed as an extension of government policy, because in [the Gulf War] much of the media was carefully and deliberately orchestrated as a policy marketing tool—often with its own full complicity. In effect, the media was deployed as an extension of a well-planned government dominated information system.... And that system—as a matter of policy and practice—kept independents and critics at arm's length."

Danny Schechter, 1992

CONTINUED ON P. 70

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $105,000.

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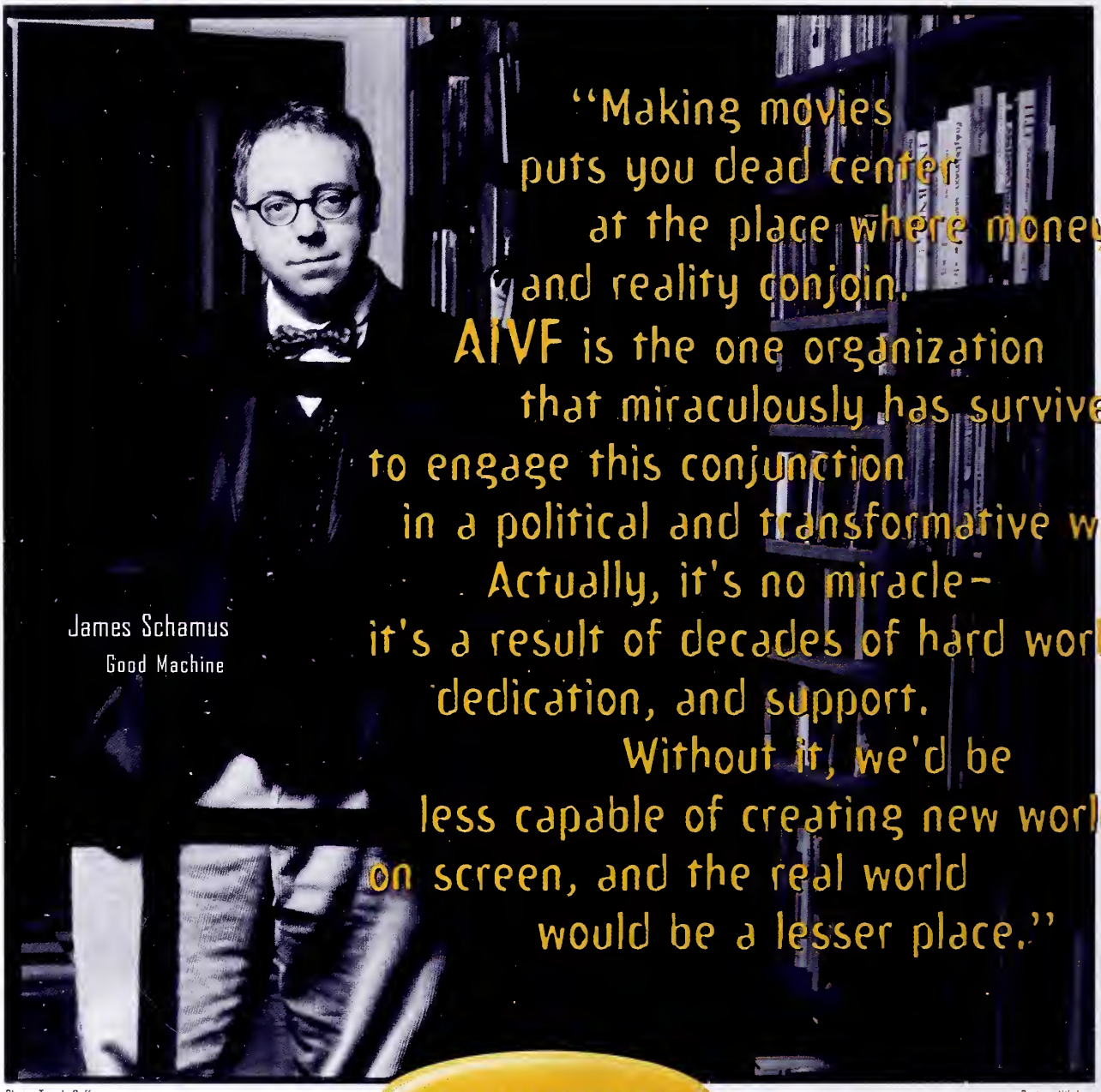


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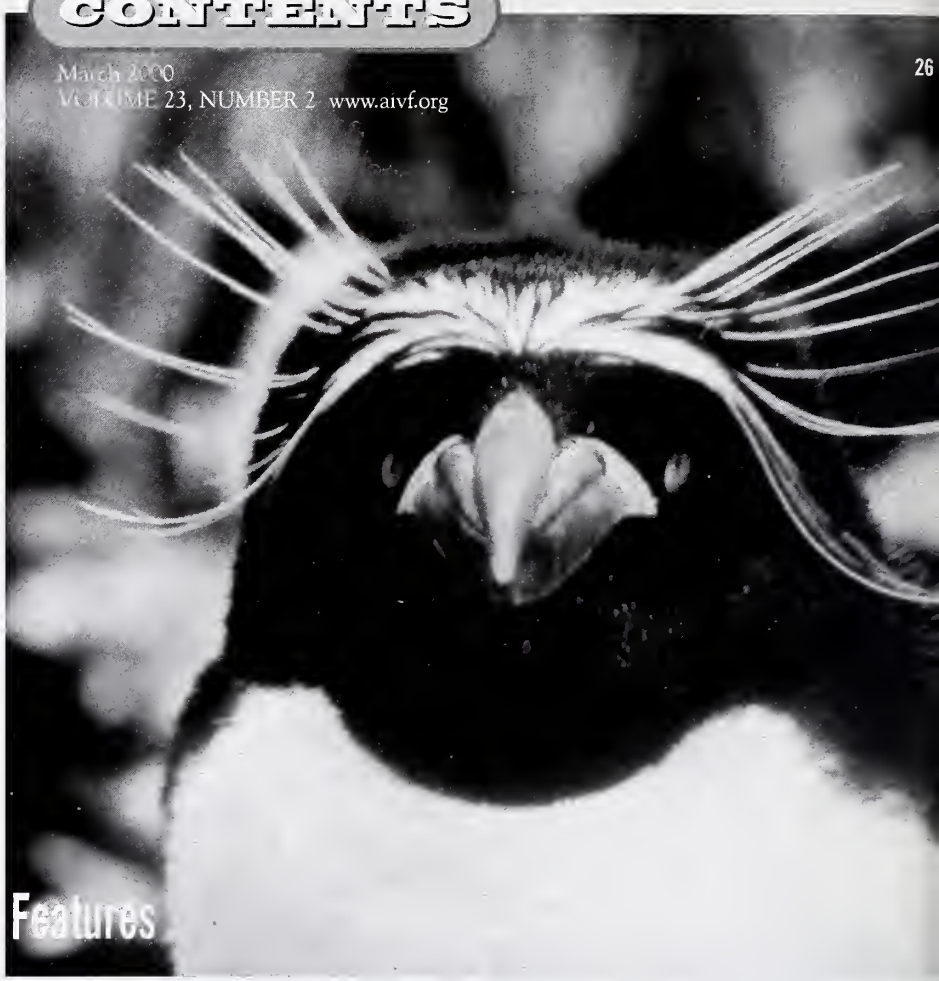
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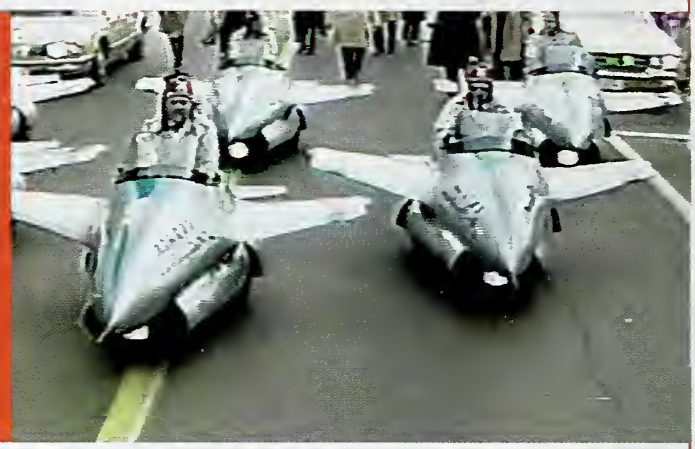


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PATROLLING THE AIRWAVES

Two new activist groups lobby for public accountability from broadcasters.

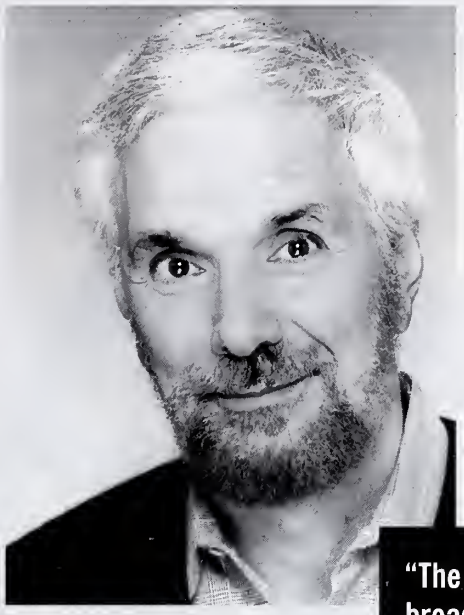
BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE

TWO ORGANIZING PROJECTS, CITIZENS FOR Independent Public Broadcasting (CIPB) and People for Better TV (PBTV), both backed with Open Society Institute (OSI) funds and based in Washington D.C., are pushing broadcasters for more diverse programming and public accountability.

CIPB [www.cipbonline.org], launched in November, targets public broadcasting and calls for a massive overhaul of its sprawling structure. "The time has come to return public broadcasting to its mission to serve as a town hall of the air and a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard," says CIPB director Jerry Starr, a professor and activist.

The organization calls for the top-to-bottom restructuring of public broadcasting, centered on creation of a national trust with a non-partisan board. Half the trust's funds would go for national radio and television production and distribution; local stations would get the other half. Coffers would be filled by taxing profits of corporate media. A special fund for experimental and independent production is also envisioned by the group, though not yet elaborated on. The Carnegie-funded commission that first designed public broadcasting recommended a national trust, but lawmakers instead made public television dependent on Congressional appropriations and corporate and individual donations. Organizers say this wreck-and-rebuild agenda will be fueled by an initial grant from OSI and the Schumann Foundation of $175,000 to date and by grassroots activism, through local chapters of CIPB and of its coalition partners.

Can public broadcasting, with its decentralized structure and welter of invested bureaucracies, be so massively reorganized? Trust proposals have recently been floated in Congress, by Republicans eager to get public television out of the annual budget, but G.O.P. infighting has sunk them. "Unless the Democrats take over the House, chances are low," says one Congressional insider. However, Democrats in control of the House might want to take up the trust proposal option, if only to force Republicans to take a public stand against a popular service.



"The time has come to return public broadcasting to its mission to serve as a town hall of the air and a voice for groups in the community."
CIPB director Jerry Starr

Certainly viewers care about public television. "There are a goodly number of $25 donors who are upset at commercialization," says public interest media lawyer Andrew Jay Schwartzman. Protests and complaints from upset viewers are a constant of PBS programmers. A recent attack on PBS' programming judgment, coordinated by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), mobilized 33 prominent individuals and groups, including the National Organization for Women, into the ad-hoc Feminist Coalition of Public Broadcasting. The coalition denounced PBS for several right-of-center, conservative-funded programs that allege feminism has been bad for American society, produced by the six-hours-a-year series National Desk. The ardently ideological series entered the mix of core PBS public affairs programming in the wake of the 1994 anti-public television push of Republicans.

The Feminist Coalition met with PBS staffers to demand that PBS ascribe to a single set of journalistic programming guidelines and boost its airtime for feminist subject matter, producers, and on-air talent. PBS spokesman Tom Epstein says that the organization was "following up on their comments" but had "come to no conclusions yet" and that the service "does not take orders from ideological interest groups."

"We need grassroots action to make stations more responsive to what their whole community wants, not just its wealthiest and most conservative elements," says Robert Richter, independent producer and AIVF treasurer. *Father Roy: In the School of the Assassins*, Richter's documentary on the recently-closed School of the Americas, benefited from grassroots pressure, eventually showing on 140 public television stations.

PEOPLE FOR BETTER TV, WHICH SINCE APRIL HAS been coordinating about a million dollars of OSI money, focuses on the obligations of commercial broadcasters. Since 1996, all broadcasters have had free access to new spectra to transmit digitally, without clear public interest obligations. PBTV [www.bettertv.org] housed in the Washington, D.C. offices of the Civil Rights Forum, includes major labor, educational, religious, and ethnic organizations. Local chapters of its constituent organizations in eight cities petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to set guidelines for the use of digital spectrum, and in December the FCC opened an inquiry. Under Commission Chair Bill Kennard, however, the FCC has shown itself timid to confront regulation-averse Republicans. PBTV national coordinator Mark Lloyd says public broadcasters and indies could benefit: "If commercial broadcasters have to provide funds to meet their public interest obligation, maybe they ought to give them to public broadcasters."

"Public TV stations have always complained that they didn't have enough money for production, and they didn't have enough spectrum," says Jack Willis, the OSI consultant who funded both CIPB and PBTV. Willis created such public affairs programming as *The 51st State* in public TV's early days and later headed Minneapolis station KTCA. "They won't have

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either of those arguments as an excuse not to do local programming and not work with independents, if these initiatives work."

Veterans of earlier battles see both potential and problems. "We could do anything we wanted to, if we had a mass movement to do it—but how do we do that?" asks Lawrence Daressa of California Newsreel, one of the activists who worked to create ITVS. "We haven't been able to mobilize a broad public around media reform up until now." Earlier efforts around media reform, for instance in the late 1920s and in the 1960s and 1970s, were unable to create broad grassroots support.

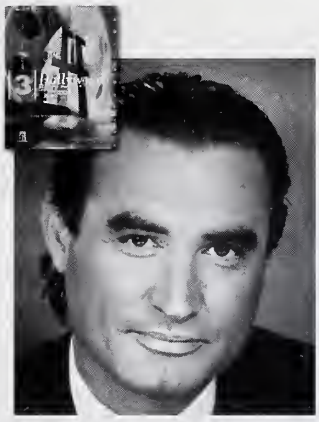
"Surely we need something that's going to give a wider scope to media advocacy," says George Stoney, the godfather of cable public access, "but the history is not encouraging." Media reform efforts with more targeted strategies have, however, won affirmative action gains, reserved spectrum and channel space, airtime for educational kids' shows, production funds for independents, and even ITVS and the minority consortia.

"Some kind of public accountability, even if it's weak, means the public can get its foot in the door," says Gordon Quinn of Kartemquin Films, who is working with PBTV. "If there's no accountability, they won't ever talk to you."

Pat Aufderheide is a professor in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C.

Hollywood Film Festival Creates Foundation Offshoot

THE HOLLYWOOD FILM Foundation, a new nonprofit offshoot of the Hollywood Film Festival and its web counterpart, the Hollywood Network, recently announced plans to foster independent filmmaking in California with a media arts center in the Hollywood environs and increased production grants. The plans are impressive, albeit nascent.



Carlos de Abreu, founder and president of the newly formed Hollywood Film Foundation

If it gestates correctly, the foundation could nurture some robust independent projects (with significant provisos). You can readily access the intended agenda to build nothing short of an independent and digital filmmaking community on the foundation's website [www.hff.org]. Here you encounter a mandate that's partly about bringing together creators and professionals and partly about keeping production in California. This reads like a thinly-veiled response to the prevailing anxiety here out West that we're losing our location shooting. Founder and president of the foundation, Carlos de Abreu, frankly describes the group as a professional conclave united in their desire to mitigate the effects of globalization on filmmaking, especially with respects to below-the-line professionals. The foundation aims, in de Abreu's words, "to keep the cradle of filmmaking in Southern California."

An emphatic component of the (fairly impressive) array of grants, consequently, is that 75% of the shooting must take place in the state of California and that the budget be under $5 million. Nonprofit manifestos usually use phrases like "the independent aesthetic" or "the multicultural perspective," but here geographic and labor issues are prioritized over aesthetics. In return for California-based projects, the foundation promises to link filmmakers with private entities, ranging from companies that offer specialized services to the big studios, as well as government agencies.

The ethos, then, might be less about independent aesthetics than it is about creating new kinds of funding and distribution relationships between those who have money and those who need money. The proposed media arts center, in fact, will initially operate as a type of referral center, where the production and postproduction needs of projects chosen by the foundation will, for example, get time, products, and equipment on the Paramount lot. (Paramount Studios Group president Earl Lestz is a member of the foundation's board, as are producer Moctesuma Esparza (*Selena, Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*), directors Ted Kotcheff (*Weekend at Bernie's*) and Mark Rydell

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(*On Golden Pond*), actress/TV hostess Janice Pennington (*The Price is Right*), and author/producer Christopher Vogler (*The Writer's Journey*).)

What this will mean, exactly, in terms of aesthetic criteria for getting selected is hard to pinpoint. De Abreu emphasized overall "creative value" as a guideline, mentioned strong storytelling specifically, but added that narrative shouldn't constitute a boundary, that experimental work recognized by the board of directors to embody creative value (especially in the digital domain) would be just fine. And with the central aim to keep the economic base of filmmaking in California, the foundation seems to be going for some middle ground between the independent scene and the commercial sphere. Perhaps the best way to anticipate grant selection tendencies would be to look at the bios of the foundation's board of directors listed online and gamble accordingly.

Any first- or second-time feature director or producer can apply for the foundation's production grants in the following categories: experimental ($50,000), digital ($50,000), finishing/postproduction (up to $200,000) and partial budget (up to 50% of budget). The overall budget of the proposed project may not exceed five million and the application is available online with no publicized fixed deadline, but an internal deadline of March 31 for the first round of grant disbursements. In addition to features, projects can be short format, digital or documentary, but absolutely under no circumstances can they be pornography. The "funds" may consist of cash, goods, services and/or promotional support.

The proposed media arts center is still in early development, but it aims to include state-of-the-art digital equipment, multimedia labs, free instruction, professional mentoring, screening rooms, online job resource centers and educational and community programs. As of now, the foundation's online community is running slightly ahead of the physical one (including chat groups, listserves and "discovery of the month" video streaming). For interested parties, the best course of action would be to assemble a complete project proposal (application form available online). If you're willing to make a project that's 75% Californian, then the Hollywood Film Foundation is worth watching.

KAREN VOSS

Karen Voss is a freelance writer, part-time multimedia instructor, and independent media enthusiast working out of Los Angeles.

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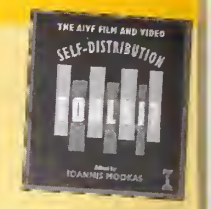
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FOR INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS WHO EXHAUST their shoestring budgets before entering postproduction, Collaborative Pictures, a budding Hollywood-based completion company, has established a new way to help finance a film: offering free postproduction and distribution services in exchange for a percentage of the film's equity. Aiming to serve five or six projects in the coming year, this small, six-employee company boasts 30 years of postproduction experience collectively and the resources for everything from offline and online editing (Avid and Discrete Logic, respectively) to helping your film on its first steps towards distribution.



Stuart Whitman strikes a western pose in *Cimarron Strip*, one of Collaborative Pictures' current equity participation projects.

Collaborative Pictures was established last year as an "all-in-one-shop" extension of TEDS (Telecine Edit Duplication Service), a relatively new provider of postproduction technology and services. TEDS was created a little over a year ago when company president Justin Whitman teamed up with production supervisors Vincent Lyons and Jason Weichelt, respectively the former president and the head technician of production company Dubs, and co-owners (with Cynthia Weichelt) of Collaborative Pictures. Together they recognized a demand for a new kind of postproduction service, one that essentially meets the needs of filmmakers by investing in them. Collaborative Pictures claims to provide all of the postproduction equipment, technical expertise, and industry contacts necessary for completing and distributing a film.

"We started this when a friend of ours [Israel Brenner] fell into this situation with his film, *The Freshest Kids*," Whitman explains. "It was our first project, though it was more of an experiment because we didn't expect a lot of return. After we finished, the overwhelming praise for the service was great. That's how we started it all.

"So often we see independent moviemakers spend all of their money during production, and then end up needing more financing once they reach the postproduction stage," Whitman observes. "So, basically, that's what we do. We are offering financing but in a different way—we're offering our services. We are using all of our contacts and resources to help in the postproduction of a film."

Some of these contacts are in the distribution world, including individuals at Artisan and Sony—the product of past remastering deals that Weichelt and Lyons presided over at Dubs. "With our postproduction background, we have established relationships with distributors and we know what they are looking for," says Whitman. "We have industry contacts with distributors that we have close personal relationships with," adds Lyons, "but no exclusive deals with distribution entities."

The percentage of equity that Collaborative Pictures earmarks for itself varies according to the amount of work needed to complete a film. "It can run anywhere from 10-50%, depending on the extent of the investment," Whitman says. "But it's all disclosed up front. We draw up a contract beforehand so we know exactly where everyone stands and what is expected on both ends."

For those applying for completion aid, Whitman explains that applicants must have entirely finished production, and that selections are based on past efforts and the appeal of the film in question. As for genre, Whitman lists the three current equity participation projects on the company's books, noting that "We've dealt with everything from documentaries to television to feature films. Currently, we are working on a documentary on hip hop for Paul Allen called *The Freshest Kids*, a pilot for a variety show on MTV called *The Music Doctors*, and the international and domestic redistribution of an old western TV series *Cimarron Strip*, starring the likes of Robert Duvall, Telly Savalas, and Tom Skerritt."

Any plans by the company to move more actively into distribution or production are, however, discounted by Lyons. "The way we've set it up now is the way I see it continuing," he says. "We're happy in the niche we're in."

EMILY BOBROW

Emily Bobrow is a freelance writer based in New York.

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The Medium is the Missed Age

BY ELLEN SPIRO

I'M SUFFERING FROM DIGITAL VIDEO OVERLOAD. DV is not a revolution, it's a consumer frenzy. DV is not cinema, it's not film. It's video! It is yet another step in the evolution of small-format, low-budget video technology that began with Sony's 1/2" reel-to-reel portapak in the mid-sixties.

The fact that the feature filmmaking community is drooling over DV illuminates the great divide that still exists between the worlds of film and video. As any videomaker knows, the wonders of DV that filmmakers tout—small size, low cost, portability, spontaneity—have been around for years. The only difference is between analog and digital and, in practical terms, the differences are minor. With Hi-8 you had dropouts—literally, oxide particles that would fall off the tape from friction. With DV you have digital artifacts—missing or distorted pixels. In editing with DV you have Firewire—almost no loss in image quality. With Hi-8 you have S-video—a semi-component signal that transfers an image almost indistinguishable from one digitized through Firewire.

The pretense that digital video or digital projection is a *new* thing ignores the past. DV is delicious in the quality/price arena, but if we are going to worship a video format, let's talk about the real hero: regular 8mm video! The small-format pioneers are folks like George Kuchar and the activist media collectives of the '70s, '80s, and '90s who dared traverse the seemingly vast divide between consumer and broadcast technology to make inventive genre-bending work. Some of the best stuff was made on 8mm video, Hi-8 video, and even S-VHS video. A decade-plus before digital became the G-string of the indie scene, Kuchar and others filled up shelves with highly innovative 8mm video works edited in-camera that would cause the Blair Witch to scream in envy.

While film fests worshipped celluloid, Kuchar's incredible body of work remained on the fringe of the fringe—as did other 8mm, Hi-8, and pixelvision innovators like Cecelia Dougherty, Kathy High, Skip Blumberg, Igor Vamos, and countless prolific activist video collectives like DIVA TV and Buffalo's 8mm News Collective. These artists works were not shown at Sundance because *Sundance did not project video in the 20th century.* I heard Sundance awoke this year from its slumber and projected video with the sexy title "digital projection." Face it: it's *video* projection. State-of-the-art video projection has existed for almost two decades. Some festivals created video sidebars in the '80s and '90s that were ghettoized in bad locations, weird time slots, or East Berlin.



"A decade-plus before digital became the G-string of the indie scene, Kuchar and others filled up shelves with highly innovative 8mm video works edited in-camera that would cause the Blair Witch to scream in envy."

Other venues took a more forward-thinking route. One that will surely be imitated is the Video Data Bank, the folks that brought you the Video Drive-In in 1986. More interactive than webcasting which beams video into our isolated chambers, the Video Drive-In brought the public together by the thousands to view radical, groundbreaking, and experimental works on an outdoor movie-sized screen in Chicago's Grant Park, New York's Central Park, and all over Europe. The offspring of Kate Horsfield and Lyn Blumenthal's dynamic vision, the Video Drive-In demonstrated the radical potential of video and the scale of its reach. There were no box office figures because it was *free*.

The danger of the Digi video craze is that the radical innovators will get lost in the frenzy to declare false prophets. Once the false prophet gets the podium and the frenzied followers are listening, the prophet has nothing to say.

It is more important than ever to look at recent video history. A good start is Deirdre Boyle's brilliant *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited*, which tells the story of a band of video radicals who tried to create a more inclusive television landscape by working cheaply, inventively, and with strong content in the '70s.

So what's so revolutionary about DV? Is it the 550 lines of resolution of the VX1000? The interchangeable lens of the XL1? The teeny-weenieness of the PC1? Or is it that people making narratives have finally discovered what people making activist docs and video art have known since the days of TVTV, Raindance, Videofreex, and the portapak: that eye-opening content outweighs resolution, that compelling images can be composed with good lighting and a strong imagination, and that broadcast quality is really anything that gets broadcast?

I would like to see this superficially hyped DV obsession turn towards the meat of the matter and look at all acquisition tools as *tools* and not as saviors liberating us from hard labor and critical thought. It's really about telling stories that are in danger of being swept under the carpets of conventionality. It's not about regurgitating hackneyed Hollywood ideas on the cheap.

I'm afraid the Blair Witch's broomstick is flying backwards into the future. Her dust is clouding our vision.

Ellen Spiro [Spirovich@yahoo.com] has been shooting small-format video since 1986. DiAna's Hair Ego (8mm, 1990), Greetings from Out Here (Hi-8, 1993) and Roam Sweet Home (MiniDV, 1996) were all broadcast on PBS and never transferred to film.

The Widening Digital Divide

A Fork in the Info Highway

BY GARY O. LARSON

"THE PROBLEM OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IS the problem of the color-line," wrote W.E.B. DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk*, offering what turned out to be a remarkably accurate prophesy just three years into the new century. While it's too soon to make a similar forecast for the twenty-first century, the early returns suggest that another intangible barrier—the so-called "digital divide"—will prove equally nettlesome. And, like the color line before it, which was ultimately woven into an intricate cross-hatching that drew on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and sexual preference to make its invidious distinctions, so too will the digital divide evolve into much more than a simple equation of the computational haves and have-nots.

But for now, that's not a bad place to start. Certainly that basic dichotomy—the distinction between those who are plugged into computers and the Internet and those who remain outside the digital loop—is sufficient to suggest the challenges that lie ahead. Viewed from one perspective, of course, the news is encouraging: access to computers and the Internet continues to grow at a remarkable pace, with the level of PC ownership now approaching half of all households, and nearly a third of all homes connected to the Internet. Upon closer inspection, however, such figures are skewed along economic, racial, and even geographic lines:

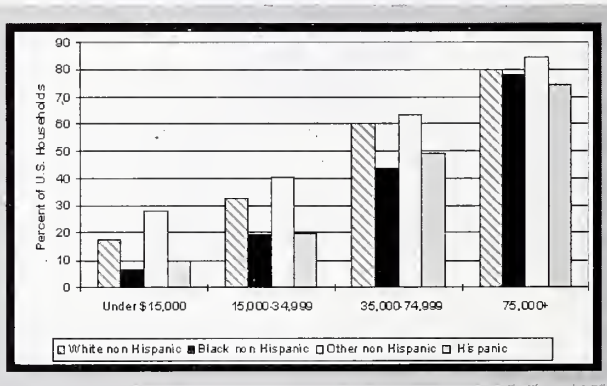
• Wealthier households (those with incomes of $75,000 and above) are more than nine times more likely to own PCs than low-income households (below $15,000) and more than 20 times more likely to have access to the Internet;

• Black and Hispanic households are roughly one-third as likely to have home on-line access as households of Asian/Pacific Islander descent, and about two-fifths as likely as white households;

• Americans living in rural areas, regardless of income level, lag behind their urban counterparts in Internet access; even at the lowest income levels, those in urban areas are twice as likely to have Internet access as those of the same economic class in rural areas.

"In most communities, the fiber-optic rings circle the business district. If you're in a poor suburban neighborhood or the inner city, you're at risk."

— FCC chair William Kennard



	Under $15,000	15,000-34,999	35,000-74,999	75,000+
White non Hispanic	17.5	32.5	60.4	80.0
Black non Hispanic	6.6	19.4	43.7	78.0

Percent of U.S. households with a computer by income and race as of 1998, according to the NTIA.

These statistical snapshots are a sobering reminder that the Information Superhighway passes right by millions of Americans, with no on-ramp in sight. The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration has been collecting such data for the past five years, and its annual series of reports, *Falling through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide*, chronicles the progress we've made in wiring the nation. Or haven't made, in some cases, since among the more discouraging of the NTIA's findings are those that indicate that the gap separating the haves from the have-nots may actually be widening. The difference in on-line access between white and either black or Hispanic households, for example, was six percent larger in 1998 than in 1994. In just a single year, between 1997 and 1998 (the last year for which such data are available), the digital divide as related to the highest and lowest education and income levels grew 25 and 29 percent, respectively.

If these are the most visible manifestations of the digital divide—the absence of PCs and Internet access in millions of poor, minority, and rural households—there are also other, much less apparent discrepancies that may in the long run prove even more socially and economically debilitating. For there is growing evidence that the broadband revolution—the deployment of high-speed connections that will become increasingly vital to American business and increasingly common in American homes—will not reach some communities for years. In this instance, it is access to high-capacity fiber-optic lines that is the key, and in this regard the digital divide will initially separate big business from small. At present, only about five percent of all buildings in the country are connected to high-speed fiber rings, but while 90 percent of business with more than 500 employees possess fast Internet connections, less than 10 percent of the 21 million smaller companies enjoy such access.

Rural America is at the greatest risk of being left behind in the digital revolution, since some 86 percent of Internet delivery capacity in the U.S. is concentrated in the 20 largest cities. And even within these fortunate locales, a similar, highly skewed pattern of network deployment has emerged. "The private sector builds where the high volume and the money is," explains William E. Kennard, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). "In most communities, the fiber-optic rings circle the business district. If you're in a poor suburban neighborhood or the inner city, you're at risk."

In fact, maybe we're all at risk. For the residential broadband revolution that we're just beginning to hear about will soon usher in an era of digital divisiveness that will affect almost all Internet users. Right now, the pickings are slim for residential consumers: About a million cable subscribers have signed up for Excite@

Home's or RoadRunner's cable Internet service, and nearly as many have opted for the digital subscriber line (DSL) services offered by the Baby Bells and a handful of competitors. In addition to providing much higher connection speeds (up to 100 times standard dial-up rates), the new broadband networks will also feature a range of delivery options. And that's where the new digital divide will come into play, even for those who are connected.

In its more benign forms, "differential service" (or "DiffServ," as the engineers would have it) will help alleviate some of the traffic congestion that already affects the Net. By distinguishing among time-critical data (e.g., streaming audio or telephony) and less mission-critical packets (e.g., e-mail or web pages), and by establishing more intelligent means of processing such transport requests, tomorrow's Internet will be a much more efficient and civilized delivery system than today's data free-for-all. It will also be a more expensive system, since the new packet identification and routing schemes will make tiered levels of service available. Some Internet data, that is, will fly first class, others will travel business or coach, and a lucky few, apparently, will board broadband's version of the Concorde.

That seems to be what Cisco Systems has in mind, anyway. One of the leading suppliers of networking hardware and software, Cisco's technology will allow network operators to "optimize service profits by marketing 'express' services to premium customers ready to pay for superior network performance." Far from being the problem of the twenty-first century, then, for Cisco Systems and its clients, the digital divide may turn out to be a bonanza. "One way to achieve high revenue per subscriber," Cisco declares, in perhaps the clearest expression of its business strategy, "is by segmenting the market and charging what the market will bear within each market segment." And that's a price we'll all have to pay, regardless on which side of the digital divide we fall.

Gary O. Larson is a contributing editor to The Independent *who reports on telecommunication issues.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

AIVF, in collaboration with Libraries for the Future (LFF) and the City College of New York, hosted the *Bridging the Digital Divide* forum in February in association with TEACHARLEM II technology conference, as part of AIVF & LFF's telecommunications series.

To find out more on the Harlem forum and its participants, visit: www.aivf.org/advocacy



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ART & ANTHROPOLOGY

The Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival

BY LIZ MERMIN

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST MARGARET MEAD USED film as a tool for research in the field, and had no use for art in film. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City, where Mead worked and where the Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival has taken place for 23 years, also promotes science over art. The festival balances the interests of its host institution with attention to artistic developments in the film world by showcasing both films that might be considered anthropological and films that explore the aesthetic boundaries of documentary.

Against the backdrop of network television's recent appetite for fast and cheap verité-style programs, festival director Elaine Charnov opened this year's festival, held November 12-20, by looking back to the birth of the verité movement. Allan King's *A Married Couple* (1969, Canada) should be in the canon alongside Fred Wiseman's *Titticut Follies* and the Maysles brothers' *Salesman*. King's crew spent 10 weeks with a Toronto couple, Billy and Antoinette Edwards. The Edwards are clever and engaging and often seem to be playing for the camera, but their marriage is going through a rough period. The couple's sharp sense of humor is exaggerated by their clothes—Antoinette favors short dresses with poodle-like frills, and Billy hangs around in red briefs occasionally paired with a suede vest—but when their fighting escalates to the point where Billy knocks Antoinette down, the film abruptly stops feeling like comedy. When their emotions take over and they seem to forget that the camera is there, the result is wrenching, and the revealing details the camera captures intensify our empathy for two people trying to figure out whether or not they are still in love. The festival also featured King's exploration of a controversial center for troubled youth, *Warrendale* (1967), evidence of the power of verité to bring abstract social issues to life.

At the opposite extreme from King's pure verité was Chantal Ackerman's *South* (1999), an exploration of American race relations centered around James Byrd, Jr. (the African American man dragged to death in Texas). *South* alternates interviews and traveling shots in Ackerman's trademark pace—slow enough to force attention to every detail contained within the frame. With the exception of Byrd's memorial service, which is cut almost conventionally, *South* defies the language of documentary. Ackerman uses no cutaways and relatively few jump cuts, allowing interviewees to talk uninterrupted for unusually long stretches, and footage most filmmakers would use as B-roll (two puppies playing in the grass) are extended into long single shots to become scenes in themselves. The film is less interesting as a commentary on Southern race relations than as an exploration of the possibilities that lie in breaking the rules of documentary.

Leslie Asako Gladsjo and Richard Curson Smith's 1995 *Pandemonium*, a BBC program about four U.S. android artists, may have been the most fascinating film in the festival. Android artists explaining their peculiar work, which is beautifully filmed, reveal themselves to be part of a unique and somewhat disturbing artistic, technological, and political subculture. Jonathan Berman's *My Friend Paul* (1999), one of the few personal documentaries in the festival (a notable change from years past), is about a different disturbing world. Berman tells the story of his childhood friend, now mentally disturbed and a convicted bank robber, with a deft comic touch, weaving super 8 footage from their childhood gangster films and seventies rock with the unseemly reality of his friend's adult predicament. Arlene Donnelly's *Naked States*, which closed the festival, follows photographer Spencer Tunick through a 50-state tour in which he seeks out models to photograph nude. Donnelly backed the right horse—we watch Tunick go from a struggling unknown craving a line in *Art Forum* to an art-world coverboy—but her film is wisely focused more on questions of how Tunick gets his nudes to pose and what it means to him and to them than on the artist's rise to fame.



PAST & FUTURE: Allan King's 1969 verité classic *A Married Couple* gets a revival, and (inset) android art is on view in *Pandemonium*, both at the Mead doc fest.

Some strong films about foreign and little-known topics included Thierry Michel's *Mobutu, King of Zaire* (1999, Democratic Republic of Congo), which uses fabulous archives and eerily intimate video footage to paint a portrait of the brutal creator of Zaire; Jos de Putter's *The Making of a New Empire* (1999, Chechnya), which weaves the recent history of Chechnya together with the a portrait of Khozh-Ahmed Noukhaev, the charismatic leader of the Chechen independence

movement; and Jasmine Dellal's *American Gypsy: A Stranger in Everybody's Land* (1999), a rare look inside Romani culture that exposes the prejudice that Roma gypsies face in the U.S.

This year's seminar was "High Definition: Pursuing the Art," co-presented by International Film Seminars and Full Res. Curator Somi Roy tried to lead a discussion about the artistic potential of this new medium through Kohei Ando and Dyanna Taylor, two longtime filmmakers who recently turned to HD as an experimental and expressive medium, but the audience was more interested in technical details. Two of Ando's dramatic HD films, *A Story about Kusanojo* (1997) and *Whispers of Vermeer* (1998), and Taylor's HD documentary *Vanished* (1999) demonstrated that HD is capable of unique textures and effects. *Whispers of Vermeer* in particular shows how HD can be used dramatically: Ando uses Vermeer paintings (looking sharper than slide projections) to create a sinister and completely surreal Japanese fairy tale—a beautiful way to use HD, which is usually faulted for being far too real.

"Untold Story: Documentary Filmmakers and the One That Got Away," co-presented by live storytelling series "Stories at the Moth" and New York University's Center for Media, Culture and History, was new to the festival this year. Hosted by Timothy "Speed" Levitch of Bennett Miller's *The Cruise*, the program featured stories by filmmakers St. Clair Bourne, Albert Maysles, Mira Nair, Miller, and HBO's Sheila Nevins. Maysles also showed an incredible clip from footage he and his brother shot of Orson Welles at a Spanish bullfight. Though Nair and Nevins twisted the theme—Nair by telling about famous men she'd met (who got away?) and Nevins by telling about pitches she'd thrown out of her office—and rumor had it that Miller concocted the ending of his story, in which he beat Bobby Fisher at chess, the program was entertaining.

The shadow of Mead and her museum can be felt in audience responses to the films as transparent windows onto other worlds and to filmmakers as expert witnesses. While this focus on content can be frustrating, it gives makers a chance to present their work to non-film-world audiences interested more in stories than in style or approach. Because the Mead is filled with films one wouldn't encounter anyplace else, it is a festival for audiences and filmmakers who are curious about the range of subjects and styles that documentary can take on.

Liz Mermin is a New York-based documentary filmmaker and writer.







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LUCKY 13

The Thirteenth MIX Festival

BY MARK J. HUISMAN





VANISHING SPECIES: Works by gay artists being preserved by the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS & shown by MIX include Jack Waters' *The Male Gayze* (right) and David Wojnarowicz's U2 video *One*, "one of the most apocalyptic yet personal visuals about AIDS."

TO FURTHER THE PRESERVATION PROJECT, CALLED MEMORIZING MIX, HUBBARD SECURED A GRANT TO SURVEY EVERY SINGLE ARTIST MIX HAS EVER SHOWN AND LEARN WHERE PRESERVATION CRISES MAY EXIST.

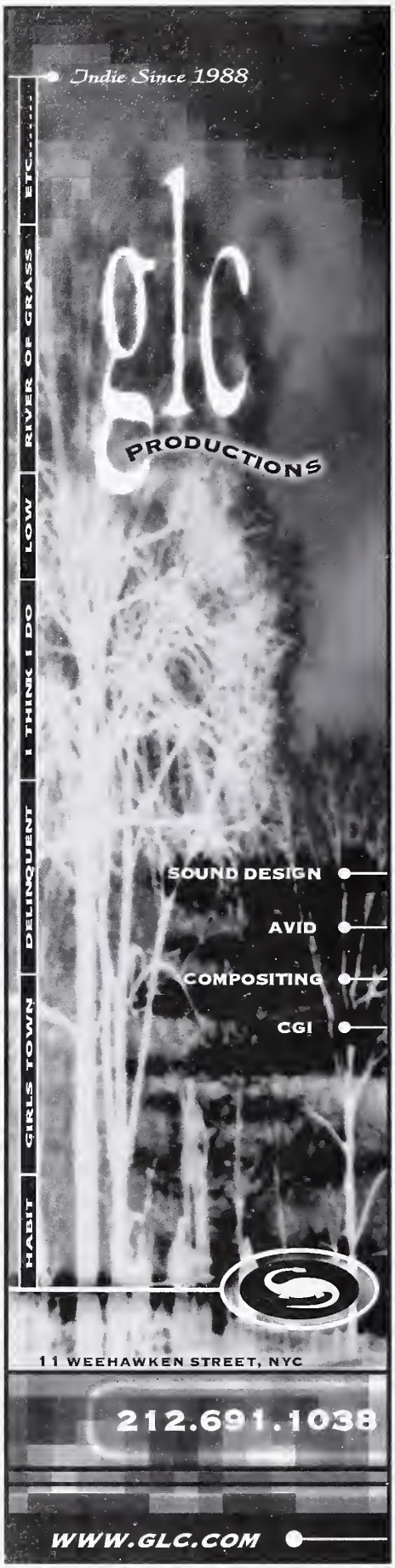
SUPERSTITION SAYS THIRTEEN IS AN UNLUCKY number. But thumbing their noses at fate—okay, maybe they were hoping for a little post-screening nookie—the gang over at the New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival titled their dozen plus one outing MIX 13: Get Lucky! The event, held from November 10-14 at New York's Anthology Film Archives, was festive all round, even if this critic's pulls on the screening slot machine came up with both cherries and lemons.

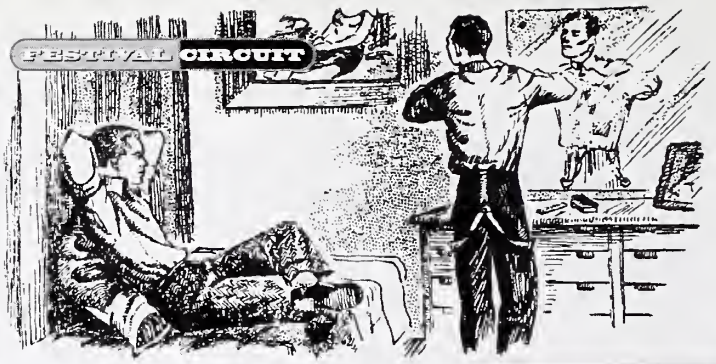
Mixed programs (call them cherry sours) included opening night's shorts compilation, 'Jackpot!,' which reflected the unevenness permeating this event for the past several years. However, as an HIV-positive viewer, I've always appreciated the fact that MIX has never shied away from films about AIDS, and this program was no exception. Mark Taylor's *Lesson 9*, a mix of medical diary, imagined narrative, random images like shiny cascading pills that seemed almost beautiful, and intimate whispered dialogue, compared the secrets behind a house's walls to a virus "moving about under my skin." Lorelei Pepi's *Grace* featured some stunning animation, while Katrina del Mar's *Gang Girls 2000* wondrously imagines an extended fight between two gangs, the Glitter Chicks and the Truck Sluts. Russ Meyer's got nothing on these dames.

MIX co-founder and current board president Jim Hubbard curated a beautiful series of flicks from past fests called 'In Danger.' As fresh as yesterday, they rolled by: *Oblivion* (1969) and *Jabbok* (1967) from Tom Chomont, Mike Kuchar's *Fragments* (1972), Roger Jacoby's *Floria* (1974), a rip-roaring version of "Tosca" starring Ondine and Madeline LaRoux, Marguerite Paris' *All Women Are Equal* (1971), *The LOVE Tapes (Lesbians Organized for Video Experience)*, 1973), featuring incredible footage of the Women's Olympics and the normally male-dominated Gay Pride, and Joe Westmoreland's *At Home with the Stars* (1984).

The 'Preserving Identities' program (curated by Jon Gartenberg) featured work being preserved by the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, which included Warren Sonbert's first student film—co-directed with Wendy Appel—the sex and drug-laced *Amphetamine* (1969). Sonbert's willfully angry *Noblesse Oblige* (1981) and James Wentzy's *Holding Steady Without Screaming* (1995) are already preserved. Jack Waters' *The Male Gayze* (1990) is currently being restored, while work scheduled for restoration includes Curt McDowell's *Confessions* (1971) and David Wojnarowicz's U2 video *One*, which famously closed with his 1988-1989 pictograph *Untitled (Falling Buffalo)*, one of the most apocalyptic yet personal visuals about AIDS. Fundraising hint: Pop groups and singers should be held up to ante up for these preservation efforts.

To further the preservation project, called Memorizing MIX, Hubbard secured a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts to survey every single artist MIX has ever shown and learn where preservation crises may exist. Hubbard advises makers to care for their own work immediately, while they are still alive.





Mark Taylor's *Lesson 9*, among Mix's opening night shorts.

"Filmmakers should keep internegatives in climate-controlled storage designed for film," he says. "Extra internegatives should be made on reversal stock. And make a will that bequeaths your entire body of work, specifically and thoroughly listed, to an archive with good storage facilities that is instititionally dedicated to preserving it."

Hubbard recommends that videomakers make Beta SP masters for analog work, transfering work that originated on digital tape to a higher quality digital tape, like D2 or D5. "When we started telling [our] stories, the resulting body of work was ignored because it was considered 'difficult,' says Hubbard. "By the time the work received some attention, the makers had started to die. It's up to us, having made and told our histories, to preserve it for our future."

It's an admirable goal with only one shortcoming: There are no women on the preservation list. And while one can technically justify the Estate Project's focus on men because of the AIDS epidemic, doing so belies two things: Women get AIDS, too, and the female film/video community has been just as devastated by cancer and violent crime as the male community has been by AIDS. I'm sure fest cofounder Sarah Schulman and artistic director Anie S8 Stanley can help find a way to memorize and preserve lesbian work.

Other highlights included the "Midnight Blue Movie Series." A fancy way of saying "Dicks and ass after the 11 o' clock news," the blue series featured "Peep Show," an amazing collection of Mexican porn reels that makes American porn look truly milquetoast, and Andy Warhol's 1964 *Couch*, set entirely on his infamous Factory sofa. Even if you had to be told the upholstery was red because the film was black and white, you could see plenty of local (if nostalgic) color: The late Alan Ginsburg and Peter Orlovsky, the (then) freshfaced Ondine and Baby Jane Holzer and, my personal favorite, a very energetic Amy Taubin who is, thank goodness, even more alive and kicking today.

Tung Wang Wu's *Missing Marilyn Monroe* in the 'Cracker' sidebar (inspired by—what else?—divine whiteness) was the best single minute of film/video I've seen in years, with its farcical racial and facial juxtapositions. Go, Marilyn-Wang Wu Monroe-Tung!

Closing night was a dead-on blast. The 'Remote Control' series featured the strongest collection of work in the entire fest, and even if I had devoted this entire piece to it I still couldn't have done the filmmakers justice, particularly the amazingly crafted visuals of Wayne Yung's *Search Engine*. The feature that followed, the San Francisco-set and filmed *The Joys of Smoking*, by first-timer Nick Katsapetses, is a simply astonishing piece of cinema. Examining what happens when two gay men named Gray and Daniel meet and decide to have a commitment ceremony nearly right away, is a perfect start for the decade following the theatrical gay nineties. What if one (or both) doesn't really love the other? What if one (or both) can't commit? *The Joys of Smoking* says more about contemporary queer relationships than most of the films of the last decade added together. It's smart, sassy, observant filmmaking, with a compelling story, a collection of fine performances and, most important, the probing but moving sensibility that once marked films like *Poison*, *Swoon*, and *Go Fish!*, but that is maddeningly absent from current queer cinema.

If given its proper chance, *The Joys of Smoking* is precisely the kind of work that could both grow the audience for experimental work and launch the genre into theaters where it belongs alongside its mainstream counterparts. MIX and its various supporters and staffers—including festival director Rajendra Roy, Stanley, Hubbard, and Sarah Schulman—have supported this work and these groups of makers long before anybody else in the country. Their vision was prescient and their dedication is beyond admirable. But I will literally scream "FIRE!" in the theater if I hear another programmer, board member, staffer, curator, or presenter "explicate" experimental work by using labels like "challenging," "difficult," or "complicated." It's damn fine work, already, so shut up and let people enjoy it!

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com] is a contributing editor to The Independent.

STARFISH MEMORIES

The Hamptons International Film Festival

BY SABINA DANA PLASSE

FOR FOUR DAYS last October, the quaint town of East Hampton reclaimed its streets from traffic cops and bull-market billionaires to play open house to the Hamptons International Film Festival. In only seven short years, the Hamptons has become a well-known stop on the festival circuit, but many filmmakers don't know why. Dwelling on the edge of Long Island, the Hamptons has been under scrutiny since its youth with industry observers waiting to see if it would ever become a contender among unofficial film markets in the U.S. Perhaps in 1999 the festival finally laid down the foundation to be taken seriously.



BUONA SERA: *Louis Prima: The Wildest!* knocked 'em dead at the Hamptons, one of several noteworthy documentaries.

Some say the Hamptons had all the makings of a "Sundance East"—what with its wealthy board of directors, its array of sponsors, and its location that's not only community supported but is an autumn getaway—but the Hamptons lacks the Robert Redford to lead it. Even so, being a scenic bus ride away from New York City, the festival is an easy stop for distributors and a great showcase for many Gotham-based independents who believe the Hamptons audiences are particularly suited for their work because of their New York edge. Returning for her second year as co-director of programming, Lynda Hansen dismissed the comparison: "Every festival is unique. Why would any festival try to become Sundance? One is enough. It's a great festival and we don't need another."

This year the Hamptons managed to get its act together organizationally, cleaning up a bad track record of film screening and party conflicts, posting new schedules every day with consistent announcements about events, and providing a very accommodating hospitality suite suitably situated in the eclectic Hunting Inn. It also benefited from having the two "Lindas"—Lynda Hansen and Linda Blackaby—return as co-directors of programming. A stabilizing influence, they also made interesting choices for the lineup.

Filmmakers were very positive about this year's edition. Woody Allen's producer, Jean Doumanian, who screened two new films, *Just Looking* and *Into the Heart*, and was also scouting emerging independent filmmakers, says, "Names do not make a festival; it is the films, the discovery of films. My films were in very good company." Equally supportive was producer Gill Holland, who premiered his latest project, *Bobby Z. Can't Swim*, directed by John-Luke Montias, in the Golden Starfish competition. An old hand to the Hamptons, Holland also served as judge for this year's student film competition. "The Hamptons is one of the top 10 U.S. film festivals with great programming. It has grown very quickly and made a very big bang," he says. "The special programming [and] the World Cinema is excellent. It is welcoming and hassle free. I don't know if bigger is better."

Some of the strongest works this year were nonfiction productions. Winning best documentary in the Golden Starfish Competition was *Night Waltz: The Music of Paul Bowles*, directed and produced by Owsley Brown III. It was an auspicious achievement, considering the recent death of Bowles. Brown, an ex-wine-

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maker, made his directorial debut with an approach to Bowles that reveals an expatriate composer full of charm and wit who as a purist rejected the likes of Aaron Copland. Filmed in Morocco with Bowles' compositions woven throughout and accompanied by footage from experimental filmmakers Rudy Burckhardt, Nathaniel Dorsky, and Jerome Hiller, Brown illuminates a very important 20th century composer who believed his music was known only because of his literary success, most notably *The Sheltering Sky*.

Taking home the Audience Award for best documentary was *Louis Prima: The Wildest*, directed and produced by Joe Lauro and Don McGlynn. The duo provide an entertaining portrait of legendary big band leader, revealing Prima's passion for music and performing while surviving four decades of changing sound and entertainment. Through glimpses of rare television footage, Lauro and McGlynn give us a peek into the world of Prima that also features his wife, Keeley Smith, who was well known as Prima's deadpan partner.

Taking an Honorary Mention, *Peace of Mind*, directed by Mark Landsman and produced by Susan Siegel, focused on the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, presenting it through the eyes of the youth who live it. An important film, *Peace of Mind* "educates and informs on one of the most contentious issues in the American-Jewish community," explains Siegel, who is executive director of Global Action Project, a nonprofit organization for youth trying to create peace in the face of ethnic conflict. Through Global Action Project, Siegel has made 28 videos on ethnic conflict all over the world, all involving the experiences of youth.

Making a strong directorial debut was Katya Bankowsky, whose documentary *Shadow Boxers* offers an intimate look at a world champion female boxer, Lucia Rijker. As it charts her rise, the film offers insights into the present-day popularity of women's boxing.

Emerging from its growing pains, the Hamptons International Film Festival has found some stability after a past of revolving staff and directors. With a strong selection of films and better organization, as well as the return of executive director Denise Kasell and the programming team of Hansen and Blackaby, 1999 may prove to be a coming-of-age time for the festival.

Sabina Dana Plasse [sdanap@yahoo.com] is a filmmaker living in New York who emerged from Hamptons Magazine *as a freelance writer.*

INSIDE HAVANA

Cuba's International Festival of New Latin American Cinema

BY CLAUS MUELLER

AMIDST BOOMING TOURISM AND POLITICAL RALLIES, the 21st International Festival of the New Latin American Cinema held center stage in Havana in early December. With close to 1,700 foreign participants (including 1,100 officially classified as tourists) and 600 productions, it reconfirmed its position as the principal Latin American venue, showcasing virtually any film produced in Latin America the prior year. But in spite of economic constraints reflected in the scarcity of Cuban productions (and consumer products), a feeling of an opening persisted, reinforced by the noticeable presence of U.S. filmmakers and tourists and the relative independence of Havana's ICAIC film school, the Cuban Film Institute, and the film festival from government interference.



Not your daddy's Cuba: Contemporary Havana is a musical comedy of errors in *A Paradise Under the Stars*.

Over the past few years, film production in Cuba has declined sharply. In the 1980s between 10-12 features were completed each year, including numerous critically acclaimed works, whereas only one or two films were made annually in the 1990s.. Documentaries decreased from 60 to about 10 a year. The collapse of East European and Asian markets also curtailed sales of Cuban films and access to production technologies, forcing the festival to close down its film market several years ago.

Foreign co-productions now seem to be the norm for feature-length films but constitute limited answers to the local malaise (as does the emphasis on video). Commercially-oriented foreign co-producers are not necessarily interested in artistic films and may hold cartoon-like views of Cuba. To complicate matters, Cuban authorities do not favor open media markets in spite of the apparent dollarization of the economy. Humberto Solas, director of the ICAIC, situates the problems as "the film industry facing spiritual ambiguities . . . [and] the consequences of cultural tourism," as well as the "problems of a mixed economy."

Symptomatic of this is the very popular Cuban coproduction *A Paradise Under the Stars*, by Gerardo Chijona, which received the festival's Coral prize for best sound track and music. Against the background of Havana's famed Tropicana cabaret, contemporary Cuban life is presented as an ongoing musical comedy of errors and deceptions, a lightness that also characterized *Amanda's Prophecies* by Pastor Vegar. In contrast, many of the 14 Argentine productions dominating the awards had gritty socio-political realities as central themes, and were frequently filmed in black and white. Prize winners from that country included *Olympus Garage* (M. Bechis), *Crane World* (P. Trapero), and *Solo Gente* (R. Maiocco), and the outstanding Mercedes Garcia Guevara's *Rio Escondito*, also selected for the Sundance festival.

The Havana event was handicapped by the scarcity of English subtitles and simultaneous translations (except for one venue), hampering the large number of foreign participants who didn't speak Spanish. (ICAIC did receive, however, an electronic subtitling unit from Italy.) More crucial for the festival's development was



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the absence of major buyers and distributors from North America and Europe. Films were screened in 20 Havana theaters and a dozen other venues in provincial Cuba, playing to sold-out houses irrespective of genre and themes and reaching about half a million Cubans.

Festival sections covered national cinemas such as German, Soviet, and Japanese films, but also selections from the Dogma 95 group and La Sept/Arte. Homages to individual directors like Claude Chabrol were in the program, as well as selections from the Clermont Ferrand Short Film Festival and New York University. Films in the Sundance sampler included *Pi*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *The Farm*, *Happiness*, *Slam*, and *American Hollow*, though the latter print apparently never arrived. Several U.S. independents excelled: Laurie Collyer shared the Coral for best non-Latin American documentary for her *Nuyorican Dream* with Catherine Ryan, who was honored for *The Double Life of Ernesto Gomez Gomez*. These films were selected since they offered distinct perspectives of Puerto Ricans' life "in the contradictory relationship between their country and the United States." William O'Neill and Michael Skolnick received a special prize for *Hot Corner* "for encouraging via film a space for political dialogue . . . between the U.S. and Cuba." Other interesting productions by Cuban-Americans included the rapidly cut *The Escalator* by Geo Darden and Eduardo Machados' pensive *Exiles in New York*.

Visiting filmmakers felt at home in the relaxed festival atmosphere in spite of the absence of business opportunities. The appeal of Cuba as a 'forbidden country' seemed odd in peaceful Havana. There was no sense of danger on the streets, dollars were openly accepted, and Cuban cigars readily available. Politically and socially oriented films on Latino themes had a receptive audience and jury, as revealed by the success of Collier's and Ryan's films. Viewers equally applauded films as diverse as Estela Bravo's *Fidel*, an enlightening portrait of Castro, and Todd Solondz's *Happiness*, a controversial representation of sexual aberrations and pedophilia in today's U.S.

Film buffs who couldn't make it to Havana can enjoy Cuban films at New York's Anthology Film Archives from March 17-26. The first Havana Film Festival in New York will present current Cuban features, roundtables with Cuban directors, and award-winning Cuban films from past Havana festivals.

Claus Mueller [cmueller@hunter.cuny.edu] is a New York based media analyst who curates the annual New York Screening Days.

This is Your Life

Negotiating Life Story Agreements

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL



TRUTH OR FICTION? Either way, getting a life story agreement with your subjects is recommended. Pictured: (above) Chloë Sevigny and Hilary Swank in *Boys Don't Cry*, and (right) the real Brandon Teena and Lana, subject of Susan Muska & Gréta Olafsdottir's 1998 documentary.

NONFICTION BIOGRAPHIES HAVE THE POTENTIAL to be great commercial and critical successes, as proven by such films as Bennett Miller's *The Cruise*, Chris Smith and Sarah Price's *American Movie*, Isaac Mizrahi's *Unzipped*, and Terry Zwigoff's *Crumb*, to name a few. But before any filmmaker embarks on a biographical documentary, it's essential to know the myriad legal, business, and ethical issues one is bound to face when filming the life of a living, breathing person.

General releases are often sufficient when interviewing secondary or peripheral people. However, both fiction and nonfiction producers have begun to recognize the need for a film's subject to sign a more detailed **Consent and Depiction Release** or a life story agreement.

These agreements serve several purposes. The first has to do with Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance. No matter how newsworthy a subject and how powerful a First Amendment argument may be, the project must be covered by E&O insurance. This is a form of coverage that protects you against claims which third parties may bring concerning libel and/or slander, invasion of privacy, right of publicity, and copyright and trademark infringement. E&O policies are required as a "deliverable element" when you enter into agreements with sales agents, distributors, and other licensees, who often will demand that they be named as "additional insured" parties.

Life story agreements should include a key provision in which a subject waives his or her rights to bring such claims. This waiver will assist you in securing such E&O coverage.

Second, a Consent and Depiction Release can help protect you from spending years on a biographical film, only to find a similar project beating yours to the marketplace. In this release, you will ask for assurances from the subject that he or she will not do anything that might undermine the project's progress or value in a narrow marketplace. These can take the form of a provision that limits or prevents the subject, for a certain period of time, from entering into an agreement with other mediamakers who may want to produce potentially competing fiction or nonfiction projects. By your requesting exclusive nonfictional (and, in rare cases, fictional) rights to depict or utilize elements of a subject's life in a media project, you take the subject "off the market" regarding possibly competing projects.

This in itself, however, might not be enough. Witness the competing TV renditions of the Amy Fisher story, for instance, depicting the story of a minor who was convicted of shooting her lover's wife. One network secured Fisher's rights, a second network secured the rights to Joey and Mary Jo Buttafuoco's story (about how Fisher had an affair with Joey and shot Mary Jo), and a third network merely used news and magazine articles and court transcripts to tell its own version of the Fisher tabloid saga. Therefore, you may be obligated to obtain the exclusive rights not only to your subject's life story, but also to those of secondary figures, such as family members and friends.

Life story agreements generally include a **window period of exclusivity.** This sets up certain goals or milestones you must achieve to keep the rights (otherwise, subjects would be precluded from having their story told even if you abandoned the project or put it on the proverbial "back burner"). Typical milestones generally would require you to secure some or all of the financing or to commence or conclude principal photography within a certain period of time. If you don't achieve your milestone within a given time period, then you would lose exclusivity and your subject could work with other mediamakers on potentially competitive projects.

You should *not* agree to be obligated to complete production on a project or have it exploited within a certain period of time, since there are several factors beyond your control which may affect the ability of a project to be distributed (such as changing programming and audience interests). Also, you should also never have your right to produce a project non-exclusively contingent upon such milestones; otherwise, your years of hard work and expended funds could be destroyed.

Life story agreements also should contain a **covenant of cooperation** provision in which your subject agrees to provide you with access

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to any information in his or her possession (e.g., newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, personal notes and writings, and other memorabilia). However, you must recognize the rights of privacy of third parties who may have written, sent, or been mentioned in private papers. Another aspect of this cooperation covenant would require your subject to use reasonable or best efforts to work with you to obtain releases from such third parties, such as your subject's family members and friends. Although a subject cannot guarantee success in such efforts, he or she can at least assist you in producing the project and lessening your possible legal exposure.

There should be a **grant of rights** provision in these agreements that would permit you to market and exploit the project throughout the world (or even the universe, especially with the growth of direct broadcast satellite delivery) in perpetuity and in any medium, "whether now known or hereafter devised," such as by theatrical release, home video (including DVD and other formats), television (including network, syndication, cable, satellite, etc.), and by interactive or on-line means.

Another feature of these agreements is the right to a subject's life story in a way that enables you to enter into a **financing/distribution agreement** either before, during, or after production. You also should have the right to use your subject's name, voice, nickname, or likeness not only in the project itself but also in its advertising and promotion. These rights and other provisions should be assignable to your successors (that is, your sales agent, distributor, or licensee).

One of the most important issues in the life story rights agreement concerns the extent to which a subject may have **consultation or approval rights**. This is an area that forces you to balance the need to form a relationship with your subject built on trust with your need to produce a project with a minimum of interference from the subject. This issue also extends to your treatment of subject's family and friends. Only in the rarest of cases should you grant any approval rights to a subject for the reasons addressed above; however, you can grant "meaningful consultation" rights (i.e., a subject's right to review and comment on the project) either throughout the course of the project or just prior to when the final version is available for screening. While some mediamakers will listen to a subject's comments and alter or edit their project accordingly, others will listen and decide not to include a subject's comments or suggestions.



Whether your subject is obscure—like the Rainbow man in Sam Green's eponymous doc (inset)—or famous, like cartoonist Robert Crumb, signed agreements can save your hide.

Some mediamakers, such as Jennifer Fox (producer/director of *An American Love Story*), have taken the potentially problematical and risky step of agreeing to remove any part of a project that may cause their subject significant concerns. These decisions are often based on the relationship between a mediamaker and subject.

The agreement should also address your right to produce or license others to produce such ancillary products as companion books, audio recordings, and,merchandising. These rights are often granted unconditionally to the mediamaker and, in other cases, are subject to good-faith negotiations, especially if the parties cannot reach an agreement on this point when the life story agreement is being drawn up.

There should be a clear understanding of whether a mediamaker has acquired solely nonfiction rights to a subject's life story or fiction rights as well. It stands to reason that a subject may want to grant these rights to different parties, especially someone else who has more experience in the fiction arena. However, nonfiction mediamakers occasionally create "re-enactments" of certain parts of a subject's life story. If you think you might want to produce such re-enactments, be sure to include a provision concerning fictionalization.

One of the thorniest provisions concerns **compensation for your subject.** Some mediamakers maintain that payment or even the potential for payment can compromise a project's integrity by introducing a monetary motive. Others would argue that compensating subjects for their time and participation is simply a pragmatic economic reality, especially given their time commitment during a project and the proliferation of outlets for biographical projects on basic and pay cable as well as on home video.

Both you and your subject must recognize the economic realities concerning nonfiction projects: that for every *Roger & Me* or *Hoop Dreams*, there are many more projects that lose money or just break even.

Some subjects (and their advisors) often request that their compensation should be at least a fee taken from a project's budget. However, this request does not recognize the fact that documentaries are often funded in increments over a period of time, thereby reducing the likelihood that there will be upfront fees for subjects. It's more reasonable, therefore, to enter into a profit-sharing or deferment arrangement, in which the subject would be paid either a fixed sum or a percentage of the monies derived from the project's exploitation after a project's costs have been recouped or repaid. Since the likelihood that a documentary would generate such "profits" is remote, your offer to share potential profits is often a sign of good faith which acknowledges the importance of your subject's involvement in a project.

Although certain mediamakers and subjects are reluctant to enter into a life story agreement, it is not only prudent from a business and legal standpoint, but also can be one of the first steps you take to establish a relationship with your subject that's based on openness, fairness, and trust.

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Following the Bread Crumbs

An intrepid independent producer offers a field guide to a mysterious land to which there are no maps, where filmmakers must slash their way through a wilderness of deadly acronyms and forge alliances between separate tribes.

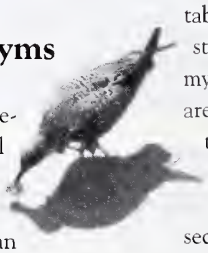
BY PATRIC HEDLUND

AIR KISSES ARE ZINGING ACROSS THE BALLROOM OF THE SAN FRANCISCO Hilton, sleek as missiles sailing over acres of tables festive with white chocolate models of the Empire State Building.

Lunch at the PBS Annual Meeting is a tribal rite, a unifying ceremony where station managers, programmers, and publicists from 350 affiliated television stations converge to schmooze, booze, boogie, and be wooed into cozying up to the PBS schedule for the coming season. One thousand people representing every square foot of America are being hosted to salmon, baby greens, Chardonnay, and mousse.

I have no one to blow air kisses to. I'm here as a lone journalist and media anthropologist, reporting on behalf of independent producers. "Reporters rarely cover these events," a surprised and worried press aide says when I register. My mission is to learn how independent producers can chart their way through the PBS jungle. There is very little available to filmmakers about the nuts and bolts of working with the public broadcasting system, although it claims that 70% of its programming is supplied by independent producers and our work is responsible for fulfilling its mandate to broadcast programs that "include fresh perspectives, expand dialogue, welcome controversy, and serve all segments of the public."

Invisible Terrain & Savage Acronyms



Trying to navigate blindly through layers of public television bureaucracy is confusing to experienced as well as new producers. No matter that my past projects aired with the History Channel, Fox, Discovery, CNN, and CBS, or that my partner's second film won an Oscar. We are rubes when it comes to PBS. We have no maps. A friend whose last film was on *Frontline* laughed when we asked for guidance: "Outside of a few people in Boston," she said, "I don't have a clue about how to work with PBS." We've all heard about ITVS, but isn't that just another bottomless well into which we toss proposals? Who are the other players, and how can we work with them? How do they work together? What should we know about pitching our projects, and to whom should we make the pitch? What are the financial options? How is it possible to work in a business-like way with PBS affiliates, which often seem to expect producers to give their productions away for free?

I'm seeking answers to these questions as I enter the annual meeting. I choose an empty chair at a table near the stage. The purpose for today's lunch is to promote Ric Burns' 10-hour series, *New York*.

Between bites, there is Lunch Gossip. I learn that Ric and his brother Ken Burns (of *The Civil War*, *Lewis & Clark*, *Baseball*, and *Jazz* fame) will supply over 30 new primetime hours to PBS this year. "It's probably the first time that one family has had that kind of presence in a schedule since the beginning of public broadcasting," one programmer comments. "Ken is also one of the rare producers who has paid back production funds," another says. All agree it doesn't hurt to have General Motors as his exclusive underwriter until 2003.

George Plimpton, the blue-blood voice of *New York*, steps up to the podium. As clips from the series begin to roll, wine glasses clink at the WGBH-Boston table beside us.

"I'll explain," whispers the Mississippi Director of Technology to my right. He leans toward me over the basket of twisted rolls, trolling his tie across a pat of butter: "Although this is a 10 x 60 co-produced with 'GBH and PBS, WNET is the Presenting Station to NPS."

I see his lips move, the sounds vaguely resemble English, but I've left home without my PBS decoder ring. Lunching with this crowd requires a glossary and a guidebook.

There is no way to mistake, however, the discomfort on the faces of programmers from the midwest, southeast, and Pacific states as they punch spoons into their chocolate mousse. They are worried that they are being asked to swallow a 10-hour chunk of the Big Apple which may be too long to sustain the interest of their hometown viewers. On the other hand, the Lunch itself—and the fact that it isn't easy to sell the Brooklyn Bridge to a programmer from Kansas—emphasizes that free will and individuality still thrive within public broadcasting. Local affiliates make their own decisions about how to use their airtime. If they didn't, there would be no need for The Lunch.

Before adjourning, my table companions assure me that the natives are friendly in this strange land. As they scoop up party favors from the table—3D Statue of Liberty puzzles, "I love NY" decals —they say that station executives and employees throughout the country are often as mystified as producers about how the whole system fits together. These are bright and helpful people. But most of them work in just one sector of the system and have distinct priorities. State networks such as Mississippi, for instance, emphasize education. Loyalty to localism is strong. And the impenetrable thicket of acronym-speak insulates sectors of the system from one another as surely as dialect separates Catalonia from the rest of Spain.

"PBS"—the Public Broadcasting *Service*—is a label often used inaccurately to refer to the aggregate of organizations that make up our public broadcasting *system*, once known as NET, or National Educational Television, now sometimes referred to as Public Television or PTV. PBS is an agency that runs the National Programming Service (NPS), which supplies primetime and children's series such as *Nova* and *Sesame Street*. PTV stations subscribe to this service, agreeing to air as many as 300 NPS programs a year at the times publicized nationally in *TV Guide*. When 350 stations work in unison, this becomes the

PHOTO: DANIEL CHRISTMAS

largest broadcasting network of stations outside of China. Such cooperation helps to attract underwriting. But independent-minded stations argue that PBS lacks a clear mandate to speak or make decisions for all public television. They also subscribe to several other programming services in order to fill their schedules and meet local needs.

The campaign by PBS to become a distinct brand in the world of broadcasting is relentless and successful. The public and the press now tend to use the term "PBS" to refer to all noncommercial public television. If independent producers are to understand their options, they must draw aside the PBS veil to see the vast array of opportunities lurking invisibly below the surface. The tangle of interlaced organizations we find there can be confusing, but they also provide many doors into the public television system. If one door is locked, there are many other knobs to rattle, numerous places to apply for funding, and almost endless ways to get quality noncommercial programming distributed.

Alliances



"It's the age of partnerships," says Jean Bunton, director of communications for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), as she reaches for her iced tea. We're at another Lunch, this time for Masterpiece Theater's *American Edition*, a series based on American novels to be produced by WGBH, BBC, and American Literary Traditions (of Hollywood), underwritten by Mobil, with contributions from PBS, CPB, and foundations. The party favors today are rustic wooden frames, each holding an etching from one of the historic novels. Very refined. We are nibbling baby asparagus and goat cheese.

Trail through the PBS Jungle.

"Although this is a 10x60 co-produced with 'GBH and PBS, WNET is the Presenting Station to NPS." I see his lips move, the sounds vaguely resemble English, but I've left home without my PBS decoder ring. Lunching with this crowd requires a glossary and a guidebook.

CPB administers federal funding to operate public stations. It serves as a buffer between broadcasters and politicians. For FY 2000, CPB received $300 million for operating grants to 1,000 radio and TV outlets. Of that, $47 million is earmarked "to stimulate new quality production" for TV. [See chart, page 31.]

No one expects a full season of "Television at its Best" to be created for less than one mid-priced Hollywood movie. CPB uses its dollars to prime the funding pump: "We rarely invest more than 10-15% of the projected production budget," Bunton explains. "Our goal is to get the ball rolling. Once we're on board, others will put up money to get the project done."

Forming alliances is essential for indies hoping to work with public television. Support to produce and air projects typically comes from multiple sources, including private foundations, the NEH and NEA, the National Science Foundation, state grants, national PBS, corporate underwriters, ITVS, and the Minority Consortia. Station-produced public television series such as *The American Experience* or *Nova* sometimes partially finance a project to be run under their banners. Pippa Scott's *The World's Most Wanted Man: The Search for Radovan Karadzic*, for instance, was aired on *Frontline* after funding from Channel Four in England completed its budget. Local public stations may also wish to assist with production costs, co-produce, provide equipment and services support, serve as a nonprofit fiscal agent for the production, be the Presenting Station, or all of the above.

Before setting out to build such alliances, indies should create budgets that cover their own salary and a 15-20% margin for their company. PBS will also expect to see program promotion, advertising, community outreach, website, and educational materials included in your planning.

This patchwork funding model can be time-consuming and exhausting. Independent producer Sheila Laffey stopped counting when she passed 60 rejections in her quest to fund the eco-doc *The Last Stand—Struggle for the Ballona Wetlands* [see sidebar, page 33]. *Cadillac Desert* (about the exploitation of water around the world) is a four hour co-production between KTEH-San Jose and TransPacific Television of Los Angeles, with partial funding from the Ford Foundation. Three hundred grant proposals had to be submitted to secure 11 positive responses. Six years later, it was the most watched series of summer 1997. The lag time between first money in and airing of programs is often more than four years. Cash flow hitches result in producers covering the gap with personal funds. David Sutherland spent two-thirds of the money he'd saved for retirement to launch *The Farmer's Wife*, which consumed four years before airing as a 6.5 hour *Frontline* in 1998 (and again in 1999), securing some of the highest ratings ever on public television. It took nine years for Jennifer Fox to raise $3 million from 30 funders to finish the 10-part *An American Love Story, which aired Fall '99*. She put it all into the film with dry times of unemployment insurance and personal loans. "You've got to enjoy selling your project over and over again, sometimes to the same people who you've sold once but who have lost faith," says Fox. "You have to keep knocking and get them to believe in it, all over again." She paid herself a salary when possible, "but I still don't have a savings account," Fox says. [A chart of Fox's alliances can be viewed at www.forests.com/trail]

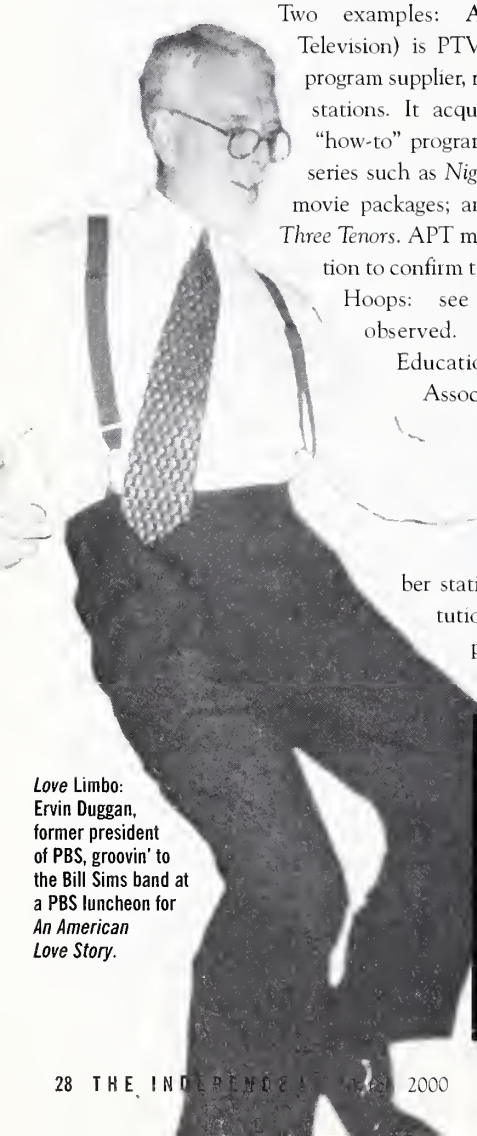


Finished projects can obtain distribution through more than 20 consortia which provide programming to fill the broadcast hours not committed to NPS. The Acronym Decoder [see page 34] lists several, with web site info. Consortia offer useful services to indies, distributing both syndicated (fee-for-license) and fully underwritten (free) programming.





A National Program Service roster: indie poster child Ken Burns, our favorite detective from *Prime Suspect*, Mister Rogers, a fowl friend, and newscaster Jim Lehrer.



Love Limbo: Ervin Duggan, former president of PBS, groovin' to the Bill Sims band at a PBS luncheon for *An American Love Story*.

Two examples: **APT** (American Public Television) is PTV's second largest national program supplier, reaching approximately 250 stations. It acquires, sells, and distributes "how-to" programs such as cooking shows; series such as *Nightly Business Report*; classic movie packages; and entertainment like *The Three Tenors*. APT may require a presenting station to confirm that all PTV standards (The Hoops: see Decoder) have been observed. **NETA** (The National Educational Telecommunications Association) provides program exchange and distribution to 169 member stations and educational institutions, reaching 150 million people. NETA doesn't require a presenting station and can move quickly (airing programs within four months, or sometimes within one month); they do not shy away from offering controversial subjects to their members. *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* by Debra Chasnoff was distributed by NETA, although PBS received much of the shrapnel that exploded around this film—illustrating how the consortia fade into invisibility behind the PBS brand name.

Gayle Lohber, formerly with ITVS, now programming director at NETA, says, "our goal is to be a low hassle, low red-tape" way of getting programs distributed to public television stations. "When you call us, you get a person at the end of the phone line. We take the time to talk to you." Her email and telecoaching to indies focuses on marketing and how to work diplomatically with program managers. Though NETA does not provide funding, Lohber often writes letters of support to help with fundraising. NETA also gives producers the first and last minute ("tops and tails") of their program to thank underwriters and to offer videos directly to the public. They do not seek a percentage of video revenue, but producers must budget for an E&O insurance policy, which can run about $1,500. Lohber suggests closed captioning, which may attract additional programmer interest in airing your film, because stations have a quota of CC hours they must telecast each year.

Thanks to Ervin Duggan's Station Equity Model, PBS stopped paying to broadcast programming. The money formerly used to pay producers for licensing was now buying PBS an ownership share in the programs themselves.

Presenting Stations are another entry point, with at least 120 such options throughout the country. Presenters confirm the program is ready for shopping to distributors—to PBS, or NETA, APT, CEN, or PBS Plus, for instance. They evaluate the film for editorial balance, production values, national interest, guidelines regarding credits, and precise-to-the-frame-length requirements. That accomplished, they will place notices on the PBS Express intranet to publicize the satellite download times to sta-

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY PBS, EXCEPT LEFT, PHOTO PATRIC HEDLUND



tions, and provide mailing and press materials for promotion.

Producers with advocacy films that are considered too one-sided to meet the "editorial balance" test may wish to help programmers put together a limited series which bundles together multiple films offering differing viewpoints about an issue. Producers dealing with a volatile issue in their own communities often find it easier to obtain support from a station up the road, where pushing the hot buttons of local pledge supporters presents less risk. Once the program has been placed on the satellite by another station, it can be easier for a programmer in the target community to air the film. One of my projects, about alternatives to juvenile incarceration in Arizona, for instance, had to be taken to Colorado to be uplinked as a national feed in order to get it aired on the PBS affiliate KUAT in Tucson.

It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School was distributed by NETA, although PBS received much of the shrapnel that exploded around this film—illustrating how the consortia fade into invisibility behind the PBS brand name.

Consortia and stations can also serve as syndicators. Danny McGuire, executive producer for KTEH-San Jose, explains: "If a producer has a shortfall in underwriting, say $25,000, syndicators can promote your program to stations during regularly scheduled teleconferences between affiliates. If enough programmers are willing to put up license fees to meet the minimum asking price, you've 'made a contract' and the film is put on the satellite schedule. After that, as additional programmers become interested in airing it, they pitch in to increase the license payment."

McGuire cautions producers, however, to consider their options carefully. He tells of a well-produced film about the growing threat of childhood TB in the U.S. As presenting station, KTEH wanted to make it available free, believing that such an important issue would be carried eagerly throughout the country. "I explained that the exposure would stimulate a long life of video sells in the educational market," McGuire recalls, "but the producer insisted it had to go out as a paid program. Unfortunately, out of a potential 290 stations, only three were willing to pick it up as a paid offering."

Barneygate and the Station Equity Model



Independent producers may be shocked by the aggressive entrepreneurial spirit they can encounter when taking a program proposal to public broadcasting today.

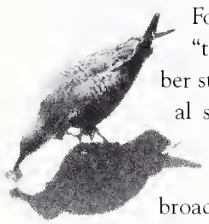
We can thank the purple dinosaur for part of this, Newt Gingrich and PBS management for much of the rest. Just about the time Barney dolls, Barney books, Barney pajamas, sheets, cups, back packs, potty seats, and sing-along tapes were the passion of every four-year-old in America, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich's agenda to discontinue funding for public television was fueled by reports that Barney's producers had no obligation to share their millions in windfall profits with the system that made them famous. Congress slashed $50 million from the CPB budget over two years. By comparison, while our government allocated $250 million per year to public broadcasting, Canada, with 1/8 our population, allocated $800 million.

The impact on public broadcasting—financially and culturally—was immense. Consortia and stations throughout the system downsized and reorganized to cut overhead. Stations veered sharply toward alternate revenue sources, becoming increasingly vulnerable to the influ-



Juanita Buschkoetter, Barney, Bill Moyers with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Arthur.

ence of corporate underwriters—and political pressures—in selecting what was considered "fundable" programming. Some stations began running 30-second underwriter credits that resemble commercials.



Former PBS president Ervin Duggan, promising "to be a good steward" of funds provided by member stations for programming, proposed a contractual sleight of hand that holds profound financial implications for independent producers and may threaten the mandate of noncommercial broadcasting. It is called "The Station Equity Model."

Historically, the portion of federal dollars and public donations allocated to producers for new programming was considered a form of "pre-lease funding," a license fee paid in advance so producers could deliver noncommercial offerings to public television. Magically, Duggan unilaterally redefined these public dollars as PBS's own venture capital fund.

PBS stopped paying to broadcast programming. The money formerly used to pay producers for licensing was now buying PBS an ownership share in the programs themselves.

While demanding an exclusive three-year license absolutely free, PBS now also took a substantial share of after-broadcast revenues and foreign sales (traditionally the resources indie producers use to make up their production deficits). PBS began to push hard for product licensing, soundtrack CDs, and companion books, opening up PBS Video, PBS Records, PBS Books, and PBSOnline (which carries banner ads and sold a million dollars worth of products last year) to increase new revenue sources.

PBS takes its cut "off the gross," according to Peter Downey, the affable senior vice president of program business affairs. CPB, on the other hand, still uses the traditional public broadcasting formula, putting up funding in advance to help get programming made, then waiting until the producer has recouped the production deficit before taking a share of the ancillary revenues. If CPB contributes 15% of the production budget, for instance, it takes 7.5% of net revenues, thereby acknowledging the value of the license to air the program which public broadcasting has received from the producer.

Downey is quick to point out that "everything is negotiable" and that "PBS wants to see producers keep at least a 20-40% ownership share of their films." He observes that most of his deals are negotiated with "producing stations," such as WNET, WGBH, or KCET rather than indies, and that funding issues "are a very large elephant with many parts, viewed differently from every side. "From 1995 to 1999," Downey reports, "we increased the PBS programming budget by $40 million from sources that are neither federal funding nor from the stations." Entering into such business partnerships is the way PBS seeks to finance more programming for its member stations. "We've found a new way to put bread on the table," he says proudly. From the indie's side of the elephant, however, it can appear that PBS is taking that bread straight out of the independent producer's mouth.

The tangle of interlaced organizations we find behind the PBS veil can be confusing, but they also provide many doors into the public television system. If one door is locked, there are many other knobs to rattle.

Downey defends the quest for revenues: "If PBS has more money for programming, producers can benefit." He cites a contract given to Peter Grubin for a series on Lincoln. On rare occasions, a series such as Attenborough's *Birds* (already produced by the BBC with no need for production funding from PBS) is acquired for a flat license fee, but *Independent Lens*, the PBS Plus showcase for independent films, still

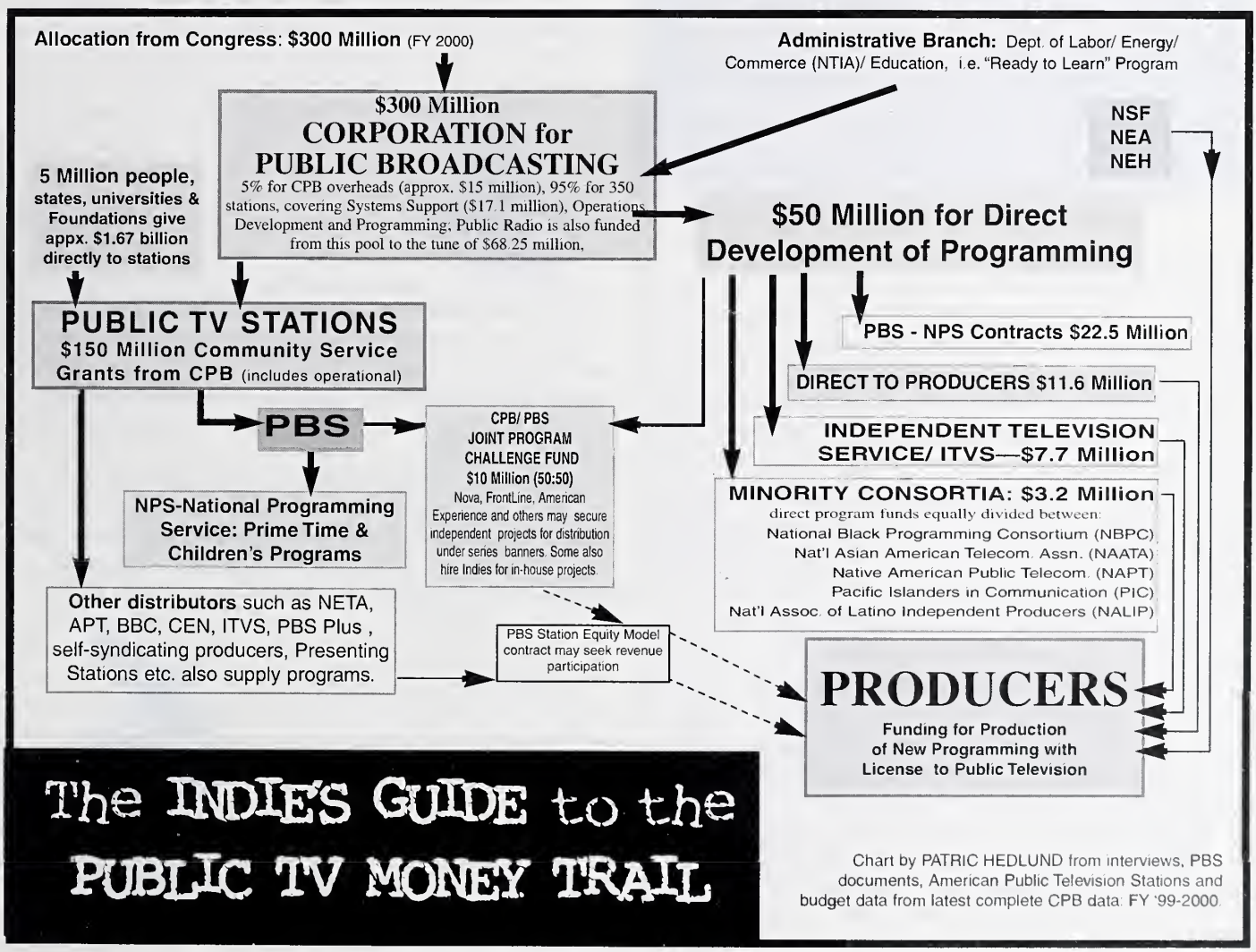


offers no payment to producers and no secure spot on the NPS schedule. Donald Thoms, former V-P of program management who fought to change that, has given up and taken a job with The Discovery Channel.

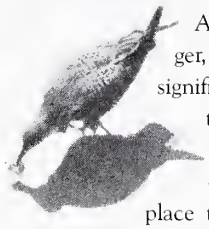
Some local stations have adopted their own version of the Station Equity Model, proposing to take 50% ownership of indie projects for helping filmmakers raise money from third party sources. Large stations are reported to sometimes ask $25,000 to $40,000 for presenting services. Indies should shop around for terms they feel are fair. Many local stations often present worthy projects without charge.

"If PBS won't do it, who will?"

While The History Channel, Discovery, A&E, Lifetime, Showtime, Sundance Channel, and others are paying to license indie programs, public TV says its strength is that "we can deliver the largest audience." PBS negotiators like to tell indies "it's a buyer's market." Some producers who have analyzed the numbers warn that it appears producers are being asked to pay PBS for the privilege of bringing programming to the American public.



This doesn't worry organizations such as *Bloomberg Reports* , a financial information and services company which gives their daily hour-long programs about the stock market to 290 public stations for free. Bloomberg is only too glad to enhance their corporate brand name with the prestige—and trust—of the system built with the citizens' taxes and donations.



As PBS is increasingly used as a corporate messenger, veteran filmmakers committed to reporting on significant and controversial American stories find themselves in the illogical position of trying to sell their projects first in Europe or Asia, so they can come to the PBS table with sufficient funding in place to retain control of their own programs. "The more funding you already have in place, the more likely PBS is to acquire a show," confirms PBS negotiator Downey—"particularly if it hasn't already been sliced and diced and there are still back-end revenue opportunities available."

Can public broadcasting still be a place where our children can find a balanced path through a culture of greed? Can it be a place where we are reminded that the human spirit keeps bouncing back even without the latest plush toy? The answers matter, because whether we're dining on food stamp macaroni or caviar, this is our nation's last campfire.

This is the language of commercial distributors such as Devillier Donegan Enterprises which now has 50-50 deals with PBS in which Disney/ABC puts up half the money for series tailored with an eye to foreign markets. Lunch table chatter refers to this as "The History of Dead White Men and Four-Legged Creatures That Can't Talk" formula for public programming. *The Greeks* and *The Living Edens* are examples of picturesque DDE projects. "We seek out nature shows and historical topics produced with narration that can be redubbed in different languages. We can't do projects with a lot of people talking on camera," explains a DDE spokesman. The DDE/Disney/PBS programs are designed to be "evergreen," with long shelf-life to yield continuing revenues.

KTEH's Danny McGuire is widely admired as a good friend to indie producers; he is also pragmatic: "If you can't get funding for an idea, scrap it. Go on to something else that people will pay for." He states bluntly that "stand-alone documentaries are the hardest thing in the world to get distributors to pick up now. We're moving away from them, toward things that are easier to sell—like musical performances and dramas."

Producers ask whether Americans really want corporate underwriters to be the gatekeepers to public discourse. They suggest that those individuals who support local stations with donations do so because they believe they are helping to bring independent, noncommercial programs to television. "They think their donations are coming to us," says independent producer Laffey. "They have no idea . . . ."

More Bang for the Buck



Marketing and outreach is a significant expense in today's hyperactive media market. Promotion for a 10-hour series is not much more expensive than promotion for a one-hour program. One consequence of the runaway need for corporate sponsorship is the recognition that stretching subject matter into multi-part series leverages the marketing dollar and increases sponsor exposure.

The cartel approach to sourcing programming is also taking hold. This is illustrated by the notable 30-hours of PBS primetime contracted from brothers Ken and Ric Burns. The Lesson? Series, series, series. Pitch series . . . or help your local programming manager come up with a fundable series concept that can package your film along with a number of others. Large corporate donors are receptive to stretching out their moment of glory into long billboards across multiple weeks.

But there's a bright light through the gloom: the law of unexpected consequences occasionally works to benefit independent producers. PBS is leading the development of an essentially new genre: the independent multi-week serial documentary combined with interactive web-based exchange of personal stories from the audience.

Prime examples: the 6.5-hour visit to America's agricultural heartland (Nancy and David Sutherland's *The Farmer's Wife*) which shows the evolution of a family as their romantic ideals about family farming collide with the financial realities of trying to compete with today's agribusiness conglomerates, and the 10-hour study of the complexity of family relationships and race (Jennifer Fox's *An American Love Story*) are both extraordinary visits into the struggles of real American families at the turn of this new century. Now, with the addition of the interactive web component, a parent from the urban core of Chicago can strike up a dialogue with a family in a remote Alaskan fishing village, sharing stories, becoming neighbors, expanding understanding of the personal impact of public issues that unite us into a larger community.

This convergence is a powerful new genre which nails the core mission of the public broadcasting system: Bringing forth voices and viewpoints you'll never find on commercial television; bringing the public into public broadcasting in a personally meaningful way; maintaining a public space where insight can shine through the hype.

Beyond Mindshare



Back at the annual meeting, hundreds of shopping bags filled to overflowing with party favors from children's programs are a hit at the PBS KIDs brunch.

PBS has launched a subsidiary PBS KIDS channel, complete with its own logo and 24-hour programming for toddlers. "Brand Young, Brand Often" is the mantra from the podium. Stations are encouraged to open up daytime hours for lucrative childrens' franchises by pushing all

their traditional educational programming to pre-dawn hours for VCR "block download" by schools. The goodie bags on every table are filled with endless samples of bright loot: Teletubbies dolls, KangaRoody backpacks, Adventures from the Book of Virtues coloring books, Mr. Roger mouse pads, Dragon Tales cuddlies, Wish*A*Roo doodlers.

"People come to us with hot children's programs," Downey explains. "We know their business plan is built on dolls and toys and that the program is the bait, but if it meets high educational qualities as well as high revenue potential, we'll partner with them. We air 1,800 hours of new programming a year. Of those, maybe 30-40 make us money. Most of them are kids' shows."

In the dim light of the ballroom, as speeches continue, my head spins with contradictions. Men in expensive suits and women with signature jewelry are milling through the shadows, rifling through the merchandise, and pilfering Teletubbies and Beany Babies from unclaimed bags.

Is "Brand Young, Brand Often" and the reach for ever younger "mindshare" a reflection or a shaper of our commodity culture? As America's media transforms, it take our culture with it. Downey argues that the diversity in PBS's funding sources—corporate underwriting, entrepreneurial investments, government grants, foundation support, state and educational subsidies—safeguards the commitment to diversity in content, opens it to more and different voices, and maintains a place for risk and experimentation.

But can public broadcasting still be a place where our children can find a balanced path through a culture of greed? Can it be a place to re-assert the startling power of human caring, where we are reminded that the human spirit keeps bouncing back even when we don't have the latest plush toy? The answers matter, because whether we're dining on food stamp macaroni or caviar, this is our nation's last campfire, a civil place for meeting one another, where the precious commodity of trust is returned to public values.

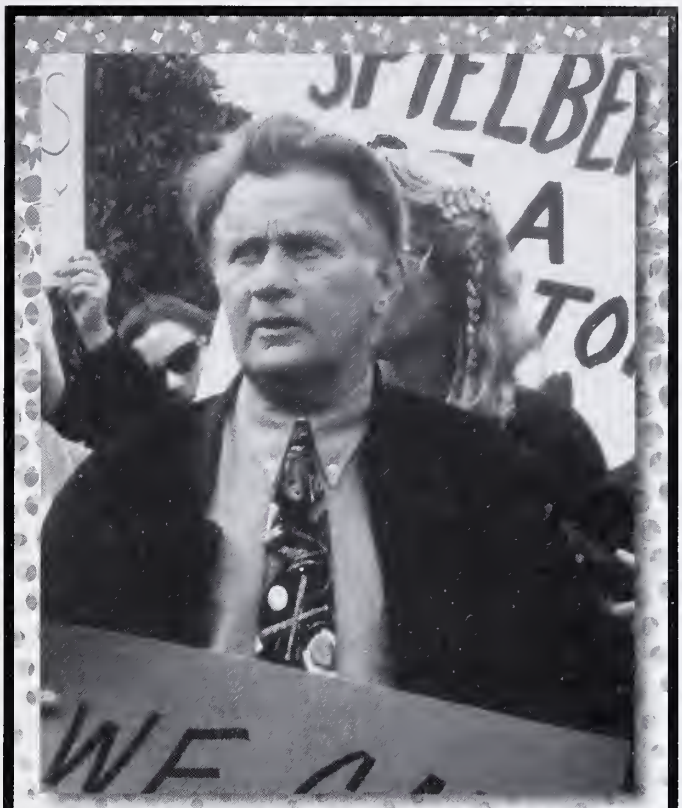


Suddenly Levar Burton of *Reading Rainbow* steps to the podium to speak my own thoughts: "We have earned and maintained the public trust. It's worth remembering who we are and what brought us together. The shareholders that matter are the families and communities we serve. Our mission is to stir the imagination and encourage the soul. This is still the best gig around."

The sun is setting across the open land, the colored sky is glorious. We hear the voice of the farmer's wife, Juanita Buschkoetter, speaking gently into the dusk: "It would be such a loss, not to be able to do what you love doing, just putting in time on a job you don't care about, as if you were in jail . . . ."

Indies know how she feels. We love making films. We love opening a window into the struggles, fear, and triumphs that are our American heritage. Independents give voice to the energizing diversity and dialogue that public television was founded to serve. Better formulas for partnership with independents are required to acknowledge that fact. Respect for independent producers shows respect for the public that supports noncommercial programming. The challenge to public broadcasting is a worthy one.

Patric Hedlund is author of The Independent Producer's PBS Survival Guide *(available at www.forests.com). Her prize-winning investigative reports and productions have aired internationally. She is currently working on a book about the future of human imagination.*



COURTESY FILMMAKER

"A PROJECT OF THIS NATURE"

Sheila Laffey and Todd Brunelle's *Last Stand: The Struggle for the Ballona Wetlands* is an eco-doc narrated by Ed Asner about Playa Vista, a $4 billion project to be built on some of the last remaining wetland marshes in southern California. SKG Dreamworks (the Steven Spielberg-Jeffrey Katzenberg-David Geffen partnership) was to be the anchor tenant. The developers had the support of the mayor and over $110 million in tax breaks. As a company town dependent on the entertainment industry, there was little incentive for the L.A. press to publicly cross three of the area's most powerful moguls.

In 1996 the local public TV station KCET declined Laffey's invitation to help tell this story: "As compelling as this subject is . . .," they wrote, "experience demonstrates the difficulty in raising funds to produce a project of this nature . . . ."

Laffey persevered, financing the film with credit cards and small donations, with the International Documentary Association as fiscal sponsor. In January 1999 the film was premiered in L.A. to overflow crowds. KTEH in San Jose, 400 miles away, presented the film for broadcast. On April 20 it was aired by KCET in Los Angeles and viewed by 80,000 people, triggering an explosion of debate in the L.A. press.

On July 1, Dreamworks withdrew from the Ballona Wetlands Playa Vista project. Now the Project AWARE Foundation and others are sending grants to update the film and secure a national airing, currently scheduled around Earth Day in April. Laffey is still $8,000 in debt, and has not taken any salary for the four years she's invested in making the film.

ACRONYM DECODER

A guide to the language of pubcasters.

APT: American Public Television (formerly APS—American Program Service until 1999). Now public television's second largest national program acquisition and distribution system. Acquires, sells, and distributes "how-to" programs, British imports, topical news series, and entertainment to public stations nationwide. www.aptvs.org

CEN: The Central Educational Network. Program acquisition and distribution; operates the program distributor CPM (Continental Program Marketing) and runs the American Children's Television Festival. www2.tcom.ohiou.edu/hetc/cen.html

COMMON CARRIAGE: Programming that is aired at the same time by nearly all PBS affiliates to coincide with national publicity in publications such as *TV Guide*, *Time*, etc.

CPB: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting was authorized by Congress in 1967 to develop noncommercial TV and radio. It funds program production through allocations to producers and PBS. It funds public television and radio stations with Community Service Grants (CSG). A nonprofit corporation to protect the use of public airwaves in the public interest while attempting to insulate public broadcasters from undue interference by politicians, but in FY 98 and 99 Congress slashed CPB's budget by $50 million in a political effort to defund it. www.cpb.org

DDE: Devillier Donegan Enterprises, a distribution company formed by two former NET employees, who now co-finance productions with PBS using resources from Disney-ABC, selling also to the European market.

GPN: The Great Plains National Instructional Television Library started primarily as a distributor. Now developing and producing programs, including *Reading Rainbow*, which it co-produces with WNED-TV, Buffalo, NY. GPN is known as an instructional TV "supermarket" operated by Nebraska Educational Television/KUON-TV. gpn@unlinfo.unl.edu

HOOPS: What PTV staffers say they'll help you jump through if you let them be your presenting station. The hoops are fully defined in *The Red Book*, available on www.pbs.org/independents, with info on deliverables, technical specs, product offers, and underwriter notices.

ITVS: The Independent Television Service. Funds production and finds distribution for independent film- and videomakers on public television. Founded 1988 by congressional directive to CPB after intensive lobbying by independents (including AIVF). "Committed to increasing public TV's diversity, innovation, and programming for underserved audiences." Office in San Francisco. www.itvs.org/ITVS

LARK: Lark International, a program development collaboration among public TV stations, founded in 1992 by WTVS–Detroit and KCTS–Seattle and expanded in 1996 to include KUHT–Houston and KETC–St. Louis. Develops international projects in financing, developing, and distributing video and film projects for all media. www.kcts.org/inside/lark.htm

LInCS: Production partnerships between public TV stations and independent producers, who can qualify for matching production grants of up to $65,000 from ITVS. Deadline: April 28. www.itvs.org

NEA: The National Endowment for the Arts. Supports American arts and artists; a federal source for independent production funding, administered by nonprofit organizations. www.arts.endow.gov

NEH: The National Endowment for the Humanities. Supports research, education, and public activity in the humanities; a federal source for independent production funding, administered by nonprofit organizations. www.neh.fed.us

NETA: The National Educational Telecommunications Association replaced Southern Educational Communications Association (SECA) in 1997. Independents can go to NETA for distribution. Provides program acquisition and distribution to member stations and educational institutions nationally. www.netaonline.org/

NPS: National Program Service. Primetime & children's programming provided by PBS to member stations, which pay a fee based on market size.

PBS: The Public Broadcasting Service distributes public TV programming nationally through five separate services: NPS (National Program Service), SIP (Station Independence Program, for pledge drive specials), ALS (Adult Learning Service, for college telecourses), PBS Select (individually syndicated programs), and PBS Plus (fully underwritten programs). PBS also manages the public TV satellite interconnection system used by most other distributors of programming to public TV stations and has divisions for PBS Video (videocassettes for schools and colleges), PBS Home Video (in collaboration with Turner Home Entertainment), PBS Records, and PBS Online. www.pbs.org

PBS Express: The public TV stations' private Internet messaging system. Independents contract with a presenting agency to notify member stations about time and date of satellite feeds and to promote the production internally to progammers using PBS Express. Promotional packet materials and photographs are also available online for publicity and press outreach.

PRG: The Program Resources Group. Program service run by 14 PTV stations in "overlap markets" (broadcast areas—such as Long Island and San Jose—that overlap with those of larger public stations). PRG buys syndicated and imported shows to provide these stations with exclusive, unique programming. New York City: (212) 974-3901

PTV: Public television, the noncommercial "public interest" stations and program distribution organizations that support them.

SIP: The Station Independence Program acquires special pledge-drive programs (cuddly animals and musical performances are preferred). A PBS-administered station cooperative that also develops advertising and promotional material, market research, and premium information to help stations get the most from on-air fundraising drives. PBS, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314

10x60: Ten 60:00 programs that form a series, which PBS finds appealing because advertising expenses are not much more than for a one-hour show, but offer significantly more exposure, netting the "best bang for the buck" award from underwriters.

— Patric Hedlund



At MIPCOM, the author pitched *Ice Girls*, about four young figure skaters aiming for the Olympics, and learned that the news for one-off producers is both good and bad.

The Future of the Documentary One-Off

TESTING THE WATERS AT MIPCOM

BY TRISH DOLMAN



IN A JET-LAG HANGOVER, I STARE HEAVY-LIDDED AT THE LUGGAGE CONveyor belt as my bag lands with a thunk on the black rubber. "Well, that's a good sign," comments a fellow MIPCOM attendee. Roused, I look around the baggage claim area in the Nice airport and notice all the cellular phones, the briefcases bulging with one-sheets and video clips. Everyone, it seems, is here to attend MIPCOM.

Each year over 22,000 buyers and sellers of television programming descend on the small seaside French ville of Cannes. More famous for its film festival, Cannes is also home to two annual television markets, MIPTV in the spring and MIPCOM in the fall. MIPCOM takes place in the Palais, a giant convention building flanked by palm trees and filled with row after row of stands, each displaying television product propaganda.

I've heard stories about MIP—that it is "wild," that it is "the Turkish bazaar of television." But most of all, that it is a must-attend venue for television producers seeking financing and distribution from the international market.

As an independent documentary filmmaker and producer, I'm fortunate in that I'm here on a fellowship provided by several Canadian government film agencies. My only responsibility is to pitch my own projects, one of which is a coproduction with the BBC and Canadian broadcaster CTV.

The downside of my situation is that as an independent I've got a bigger challenge than most of my conference peers. Unlike the majority of sellers, I'm not here with a number of series or a large portfolio of product. Rather, I'm one individual trying to develop some one-offs and one limited series.

Nonetheless, I'm optimistic. My mission is to meet people, to further existing relationships, to find international partners, and above all, to get some money for projects. Having prepared ahead, I have several appointments set up throughout the week. A graphic designer has whipped up a brochure outlining my projects, I have hundreds of business cards, my pitches are ready. I feel prepared.

If MIPCOM and its rows and rows of stands, and thousands of faces hawking their wares are any indication, the distributor is right when he states, "There are more programs out there than could ever be broadcast."

But I also know that one-offs swing in and out of favor. At the very least, I figure, this experience will provide a barometer of the interest in stand-alone documentaries among international buyers, and perhaps give me some clues about what kind of films are currently in demand.

ON THE SURFACE, THE ENVIRONMENT FOR DOCS SEEMS POSITIVE. THE last 10 years have brought about big changes to the television market and particularly to documentaries. The proliferation of television sta-

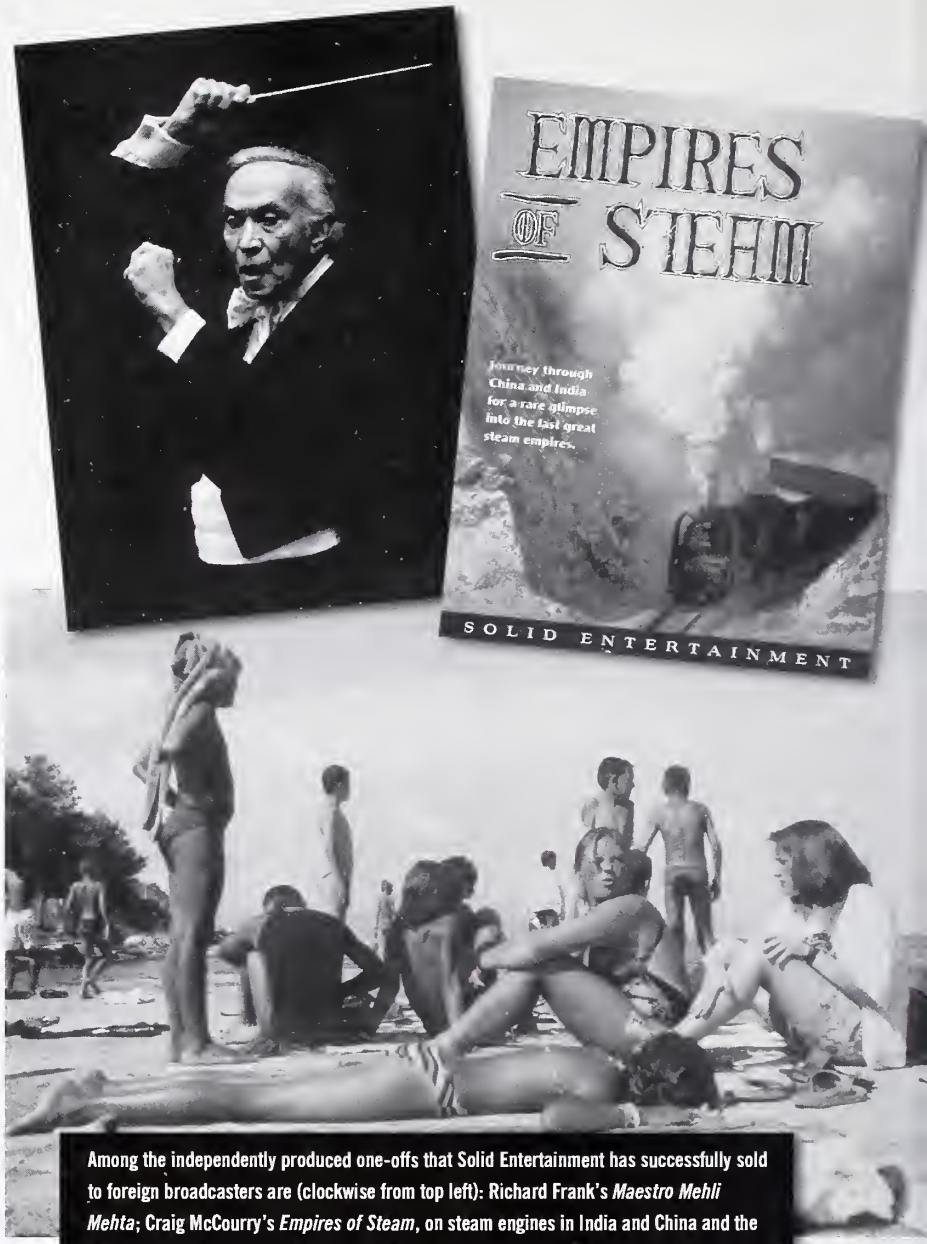
COURTESY TRISH DOLMAN

tions has meant a huge increase in demand for programming. According to *Variety*, documentary now represents 50% of all new program introductions into the marketplace. The infiltration of cable, digital, and satellite into Europe has created a whole new market.

In a small, family-run Italian restaurant near the Palais, I chat about the growing European market with Richard Propper from Solid Entertainment, an LA-based distributor that represents 90 hours solely of documentary programming. Propper tells me that "80% of all international sales occur in the European market." It seems that I am in the right place at the right time.

However, Propper also notes that broadcasters tend to favor a certain kind of documentary—those co-produced with other broadcasters. This is what's represented by the bulk of those impressive numbers. Broadcaster co-producers generally offer "a guiding hand to make improvements," says Propper, which results in "stronger editorial content" and a proper broadcastable length. In other words, the involvement of a broadcaster makes for a film that is easier for other broadcasters to buy. "Independent" documentaries are harder to sell because the filmmaker has made the film with their own funding and the result "has one voice—that of the director." Propper concludes, "There are documentaries of passion, and then those that sell."

This is an argument I've heard many times before, ever since I started making documentaries. On the plane to France, I thought about the first time I pitched a documentary idea to a broadcaster. While I reeled off the concept, he distractedly rifled through papers on his desk, until finally, heaving a sigh, he looked up and asked, "Trish, what have you done that I would have seen?" As I sputtered a response, he clarified, "On national television, I mean."



Among the independently produced one-offs that Solid Entertainment has successfully sold to foreign broadcasters are (clockwise from top left): Richard Frank's *Maestro Mehli Mehta*; Craig McCourry's *Empires of Steam*, on steam engines in India and China and the legacy of colonialism; and *Memories Do Not Burn* by Paul Dokuchitz — proving that it is still possible to find buyers for the stand-alone documentary.

At the time, I was trying to make a documentary about four Costa Rican women who ran a feminist radio station. The film was to document their journey to the 1994 UN Conference on Women in Beijing. But feminism was a hard sell. In addition, there was no Canadian content (a requirement for most Canadian broadcasters), and I was inexperienced. Alas, the film never got made. But it spurred me on to figure out what ideas would work for television and which of those ideas I liked.

Six years later, having produced several projects for the Discovery Channel, CBC, and Vision TV, I am now in production on two documentaries and have several others in development. The largest, a feature-length doc called *Ice Girls*, is a treaty co-production with the BBC and CTV. It's a *Hoop Dreams*-styled film about four girls who are pursuing their dream of becoming Olympic-level figure skaters. Ironically, in some ways it's similar to my original idea—four women on a mission to go somewhere and accomplish something.

During the five years I've tried to get my ideas to work in the broadcast market, I've had the opportunity to contemplate the fate and future of the one-off documentary. As government resources continue to dwindle (yes, even here in Canada), I've noticed that independents have been forced to come up with creative ways of financing their films. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it seems to dictate one of two fates: make the film you want to make, no matter what, using arts grants, deferrals, unpaid labor, and your own sweat and blood. The outcome of this route is sometimes met with critical acclaim, but often at the cost of relationships, bank accounts, and credit ratings. The second route involves getting broadcasters on board as co-producers in order to obtain advances or pre-licenses, adding distribution guarantees, then completing the package with grants, deferrals, sweat, etc. The outcome of this path, in theory, is easier on your credit rating, garners a larger international audiences, and may even result in some realized profit.

This is the route that Propper recommends. And it's the one I'm prepared to take at MIPCOM. The slate of projects I am toting here is a combination of both passion and marketability. *Ice Girls* stems from

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SOLID ENTERTAINMENT

my interest in the experience of girls in sport and taps into a huge figure-skating audience. Another project, *Britannia*, is a one-hour documentary about a small *Twin Peaks*-like mining town that is faced with a huge pollution problem. The film has a lot of heart, but it is harder for the international market to swallow because it screams of regionalism on first glance.

But I run up against another barrier here. As I pitch *Ice Girls* to prospective distributors, I am told repeatedly that its 90-minute length will not sell. The international market is fixated on a broadcast one-hour (actually, 50-minute) length. Undeterred, I believe that if the film is sold properly, it will air as a special around the Olympics. Both the BBC and CTV believe in this, so I continue to seek others who will.

At a meeting later in the week, I ask Jan Rofekamp, a sales agent whose Montreal-based boutique company Films Transit carries many award-winning titles, about his thoughts on the documentary market. "It is really becoming clear now, even though documentary is becoming a bit of an industry, there is really an A market and a B market," he says. The 'A' market represents "the old clients, the primetime public channels who are being stimulated now by new channels that have shown that if you put documentaries in primetime, and if they are promoted properly, they will get audiences." This A market buys "really good, really strong one-offs."

The B Market is represented by the new cable, satellite, and specialty channels that are "hungry for documentary programming," Rofekamp says, but more along the vein of "factual entertainment, series about dangerous weather, or the best train rides in the world." He continues, "Ten years ago, only the 'A' market existed." Now the 'B' is a place to re-sell or sell second windows.

The down side for producers and filmmakers is that these two markets have become 'volume' markets. In other words, the market demand has been for series and blocks of programming. Producers have risen to the challenge, but this has resulted in a glut of documentary and factually-based programming. If MIPCOM and its rows and rows of stands, and thousands of faces hawking their wares are any indication, Propper is right when he states, "There are more programs out there than could ever be broadcast."

The impact of this program glut is that license fees have come down. A distributor will now have to sell seven or eight territories in order to make a decent profit. My experience tells me that the only way out of this market saturation is to create less programming that works in more territories. "MIP Docs" (multi-broadcaster, international, pre-licensed documentaries) have been on the rise in that last few years. *Hitman Hart: Wrestling with Shadows*, a documentary that has made a huge splash at festivals and on television, is a classic example. A&E, BBC, Arte, and TV Ontario from Canada partnered together to create a high-impact, character driven, feature-length documentary about WWF wrestler Brett Hart. The result is a compelling, well-crafted tale that peers behind the bravado and the act that is wrestling. It is also a project that has made the broadcasters happy. "It was a dream project," claims commissioning editor Rudy Buttignol from TV Ontario, "because it was a great subject that came together with the right partners."

MY SECOND TO LAST DAY IN CANNES, I FINALLY TRACK DOWN PAUL Hamann, Head of Documentaries and History at the BBC. A year and a half ago, I had pitched him the idea for *Ice Girls* at the Banff Television festival. As we sip champagne on the terrace of the Carlton overlooking an incredible sunset on the Mediterranean, we tackle some final issues facing our co-production agreement.

The BBC is definitely part of the 'A' list. Hamann's department commissions nearly 200 hours of high-end documentary programming per year. I am surprised and delighted about his thoughts on the future. "I see us making more long-form documentaries on issues that effect most people regardless of background or class: the plight of the old, the young, and the disadvantaged. We will clearly see less of the docusoap genre and perhaps fewer documentaries, but there will be more high profile singles sold as events." This seems contrary to what the current market wants—an international, 50-minute doc—and it is probably the reason why I am doing my film for the BBC, which is happy with a 90-minute documentary. Perhaps the future is more positive than I thought.

On the other end of the spectrum, Hamann also sees an increase in docs "that are shot at low-cost on DV, that are more subjective, more experimental, that will run well late at night. Clearly, the future is the continued demise of celluloid and the continued rise of DV." Undoubtedly, technology is shaping the future of the documentary. Though I mourn the end of film, I also see that digital video has been the answer to reduced budgets and increased demand. Perhaps it is also a way to incorporate independent film into the broadcast market. "The emergence of digital video technology," Hamann says, "means that there will be more authorship and intellectual ownership because one person can do it all. It's terribly exciting. We've created a climate here where we can get away with more subjectivity."

Richard Propper believes that one-offs will continue as they are; however, "we will see a lot more 'new investigative documentaries' where technology has allowed the filmmaker to get into more tight and interesting places." Dan Wetherbee's *The Real Stuff* is an example of this. Shot with a 1 lb. Mini DV camera, the film is about astronauts who train to fly on the space shuttle. Without such small technology, the film would not have been able to get into the cramped quarters of space travel. Not only does technology allow us to go where no filmmaker has gone before, but perhaps it will give us the editorial control and intimacy of an independent documentary.

ON MY LAST EXHAUSTING DAY AT MIPCOM, I HAVE PROBABLY THE best meetings and pitches of my entire trip. I receive nothing but positive feedback on my projects. Ironically, several thousand miles from home, I meet with a reputable Canadian distributor who ends up practically rolling on the ground with laughter when I tell him about the wacky characters in the small mining town of Britannia. He is also excited about *Ice Girls* and makes no mention of the length. Happily, he thinks both films are sellable to the international market. I also find a possible German co-producer for other projects I am developing. I realize, for the umpteenth time, that the challenge for producers and filmmakers is finding the right homes for our projects, the right partners. I may have to travel the world, but I've managed to find broadcasters who share a passion for my ideas and see their potential to reach an audience.

In some ways, it's like entrusting your luggage with an airline. Ultimately the delivery is in someone else's hands. I found out later in the week that 18 of the other people in my group lost their luggage and had to wear the same clothes for three days. I consider myself lucky.

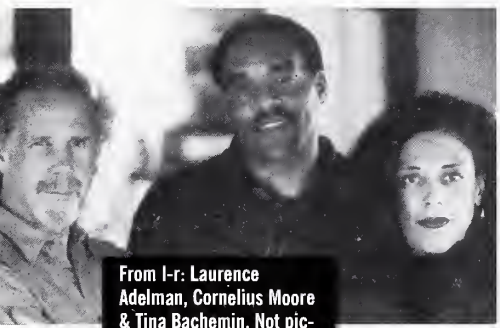
Trish Dolman is an independent producer and director based in Vancouver.

F.A.Q. & info

DISTRIBUTOR F.A.Q.

CALIFORNIA

California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St., #420, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax: 621-6255; contact@newsreel.org; www.newsreel.org; Contact: Lawrence Daressa, Director of Acquisitions



From l-r: Laurence Adelman, Cornelius Moore & Tina Bachemin. Not pictured: Lawrence Daressa

What is California Newsreel?
Along with Third World Newsreel, we are the oldest non-profit media distributor in the United States.

Who is Newsreel?
Our principal directors are Lawrence Adelman, Lawrence Daressa, and Cornelius Moore. We've just added Tina Bachemin from PBS in San Francisco as Promotions Director. Steve Guy is our Administrative Director.

Total number of employees:
Six.

How, when, and why did Newsreel come into being?
It was founded in 1968 to provide an alternative source of information on the anti-war movement and other social change movements of the day.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind Newsreel:
Focus! It's better to do a few things well than many things poorly.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Newsreel or its founders and/or key staff?
Our longevity. Larry Daressa has been at Newsreel for 26 years, Larry Adelman for 24 years, and Cornelius for 19. That's a total of 69 years together.



Among the distrib's best-known works: Marlon Riggs' astute critiques of black stereotypes in American culture (*Ethnic Notions*) and in television (*Color Adjustment*).

How many works are in your collection?
Over 100.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Among them are *Ethnic Notions*, *Black Is . . . Black Ain't*, and *Color Adjustment* by Marlon Riggs; *A Question of Color* by Kathe Sandler; *The Black Press* by Stanley Nelson; *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask* by Isaac Julien; *Aime Cesaire: A Voice for History* by Euzhan Palcy; *Lumumba: La mort du prophète* by Raoul Peck; *Africa, je te plumerai*, *Clando*, and *Chief!* by Jean-Marie Téno; *Finzan*, *Guimba*, and *La Genese* by Cheick Oumar Sissoko; *Hyenas*, *Le Franc*, and *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil* by Djibril Diop Mambéty.

What types of works do you distribute?
We're currently focusing on African American life and history, African cinema, race and diversity, and media and society.

What drives you to acquire the titles you do?
We're very selective. Our first consideration is to ask if the title contributes significantly to the discourse around our targeted thematics. A secondary consideration is whether or not it has a broad enough interest to repay the amount of money and effort we insist on putting into the promotion of every title we acquire.

How is your collection organized?
Thematically.

Is there such a thing as a "Newsreel" title?
It's a film with ideas, a film with a strong point of view with serious intellectual content and theoretical grounding.

Best known title in Newsreel's collection:
Ethnic Notions by Marlon Riggs.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
To reach the potential market for a title as thoroughly and frequently as possible.

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Where do Newsreel titles generally show?
They show at colleges, high schools, public libraries, media arts centers, community forums, exhibits, panels, conferences, and also in corporate diversity training.

How do educators and community members find out about the titles you handle?
Through direct mail, exhibitions, and screenings at conferences, reviews, and of course, via the web.



Do you develop study guides to accompany your titles or is this something the makers are doing on their own?
Right now it's a little of both, but it's best if the filmmaker comes up with it.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
Contact us. If it sounds like a fit, we'll ask to see a preview copy. We also keep abreast of what's been funded and submitted for funding.

The role of an educational distributor in society is to . . .
promote materials that would not be supplied by the commercial sector. The efficacy of any educational or social change-oriented film must ultimately be measured by the impact it has on the subject and the discussion it generates.

Biggest change at Newsreel in recent years:
The development of a web site which promotes the films and acts as a resource.

Most important issue facing Newsreel today:
Finding new and good titles. From our vantage point as distributor, we see not only what films exist but also which are missing. A lot of films come to us in search of a use.

Where will Newsreel be 10 years from now?
Unfortunately, we're not tapped into the psychic network, but the future of most distribution depends on the nature of technology.

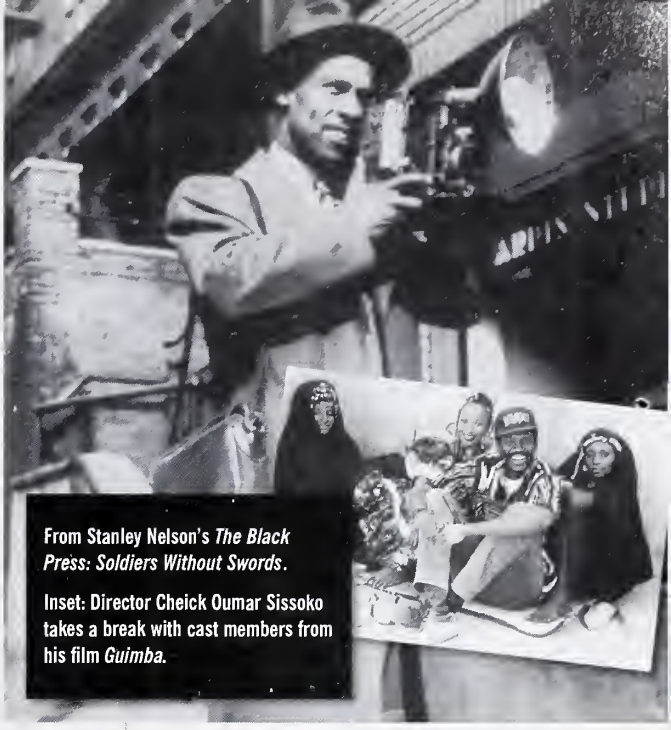
You knew Newsreel had made it as a company when . . .
we got mentioned in the *New York Times*.

The biggest issue facing social issue mediamaking and distribution is . . .
There is a great necessity to look at what constituents and communities need before making a film. Rather than producing a documentary and then finding an audience to distribute it to, filmmakers should make audience needs central from the beginning.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
If we weren't distributing films, we wouldn't be California Newsreel.

What distinguishes you from other distributors?
Rather than carry the broadest possible selection of titles, like video supermarkets such as PBS Video, we have concentrated on a small number of thematic areas, usually corresponding to a growing social movement or emerging scholarly discourse. This focused distribution has been successful because it allows us to segment our markets, give our collection thematic coherence and visibility, and concentrate on just a few titles at a time. Perhaps even more importantly, it has enabled us to gain an intimate familiarity with each of our chosen areas of concentration. We participate regularly, not just as vendors but as colleagues in the regular professional life of the field, presenting at conferences, writing for their journals, and joining in their organizational life.

Because we focus our distribution resources, Newsreel is one of the few distributors who still, as a matter of principle, offer every producer an advance against royalties as part of virtually every distribution agreement. We often will sign films well before completion, so these royalty advances can actually help fund a film's postproduction. Advances can range from as little as $5,000 to as much as $30,000 and are estimated to approximate the title's first two years' anticipated royalties.



From Stanley Nelson's *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords*.

Inset: Director Cheick Oumar Sissoko takes a break with cast members from his film *Guimba*.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be. . .
to do a needs assessment. Filmmakers submit videos to us continuously. But an inordinate number of them (including some immaculately produced ones with munificent budgets) evince little understanding of their supposed audiences' needs or how they might be used. Too many documentaries are of only anecdotal interest. Too many more seem more designed simply for a screening at Sundance rather than for any educational or organizing purposes.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
One of our new releases, *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil*, opens April 26th at the Film Forum in New York City. It's the last film by the late Senegalese master director Djibril Diop Mambety. Also, we will be releasing later this year *Faat Kine* by Ousmane Sembene, the father of African cinema.

The future of educational media distribution in this country is one which . . .
will be heavily impacted by interactive, multimedia technologies.

Famous last words:
Pre-payment required.

Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or email lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.



Robeson project director Viviana Bianchi (right) & friend

THE PAUL ROBESON FUND & THE FUNDING EXCHANGE

BY MICHELLE COE

The Funding Exchange/Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, 666 Broadway, Room 500, New York, New York 10012; (212) 529-5300; fax: (212) 982-9272; www.fex.org. Contact for Paul Robeson Fund: Viviana Bianchi, Project Director. Contacts for the Funding Exchange: Sandra M. Laureano, Grants Program Director; Angela Moreno, Program Officer; Eleanor Maunsell, Grants Department Assistant.

What is the Funding Exchange?
The Funding Exchange (FEX) is a network of 15 progressive community foundations located across the country and a national office located in New York City with its own grant-making programs.

When and why did it come into being?
The Funding Exchange is a partnership of activists and donors that began in the 1970s when small groups of donors and community organizers banded together in Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco to find new ways to support social movements. They coined the phrase "change, not charity," because they believed in the importance of tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. Most of the founding donors had inherited wealth, which provided the seed money to launch nearly all the community foundations in the network.

What distinguishes you from the more traditional foundations? How does the Funding Exchange facilitate "a national movement for economic justice"?
One of our most distinguishing features is our commitment to community control of grant-making. To ensure grassroots participation, the national office established three activist-advised funds: the OUT Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation, the Saguaro Fund, and the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media. Each has a small grant-making board made up of activists who review relevant proposals once a year and propose where the grant monies should be allocated.

Because the Funding Exchange supports programs that foster long-term structural or political change—as opposed to direct service programs that lack an organizing or deep-rooted social change component—we tend to fund projects that other foundations may perceive as too controversial, too political, too experimental or too new. Because community representatives are involved in decision-making, we attract a particularly thoughtful and dedicate cadre of donors who appreciate the significance of redistributing power as well as money.

The Funding Exchange has 15 member foundations, all supporting grassroots organizing for social and economic change. Do they function independently?
The 15 member funds have their own grant-making programs and priorities, which are local or regional in scope. They are autonomous, with their own offices, boards, and guidelines. They share the endowment fund and do additional fund-raising independently, with budgets varying considerably, and grant-making from approximately $200,000 up to over a $1M a year.

Do they fund media?
Some support media to a limited extent. They should be contacted separately to find out their priorities. [Links to all member foundations can be found at www.fex.org.] The primary support for film, video, and radio production within the Funding Exchange network is through the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media.

Can individuals apply for the Funding Exchange grants or are they limited to organizations?
Only the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media accepts applications from independent media producers. Otherwise, individuals are not eligible to receive grants from the Funding Exchange.

What is the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media's relation to the Funding Exchange? When and why was it established?
The Paul Robeson Fund is one of the three activist-advised funds of the Funding Exchange. It was established in 1987, after the demise of the Film Fund, when the Funding Exchange felt the need to consolidate its funding of social-issue media. The fund was named to honor the singer and civil rights activist Paul Robeson. The FEX national office raises funds for the Robeson Fund from individual donors and institutions such as the New York State Council on the Arts and the Bohem Foundation. The monies raised are used by the fund for grant-making.



Clarence Fitch in Tami Gold's documentary *Another Brother.*

The driving philosophy behind the Paul Robeson Fund is . . .
to support the production of progressive independent media (radio, film, and video) that can be used as a tool for organizing communities against social and economic injustice.

How has the funding climate for independent media changed since the Robeson Fund's inception?
The climate has changed in diverse and significant

BIANCHI PHOTO NORM HARRIS; FITCH PHOTO WILLIAM SHORT; OPPOSITE, COURTESY FILMMAKER (TOP) & WOMEN MAKE MOVIES; OTHERS COURTESY ROBESON

ways since 1987. The so-called right-wing "cultural war" of the eighties and early nineties succeeded in reducing public funding for art, culture, and media in general. The relentless attack on so-called "controversial" themes also contributed to a reduction of outlets and productions with progressive and independent viewpoints.

The new corporate media configuration characteristic of the late nineties is posing new challenges to funders and mediamakers alike. In the global corporate world, the need for progressive mediamaking and alternative distribution channels has become essential in building the progressive movement. In the face of growing funding demands and as public funding for independent media and the arts in general continues to shrink, foundations concerned with supporting media have been compelled to make strategic decisions regarding their grant-making priorities.



From Jennifer Jako's *Bloodlines* (top) and *Golden Threads* by Lucy Winer & Karen Eaton.

For example, the Robeson Fund found it more strategic to support only the pre-production and distribution stages of a film or video project. Support for pre-production provides the seed money for alternative or controversial projects to get off the ground while serving as leverage to procure other sources of support. Additionally, support of grassroots distribution initiatives aims at encouraging mediamakers to find alternative distribution models that would further the use of media as a tool for social change organizing.

The Funding Exchange projects itself as a "philanthropist for the cutting edge." What types of projects does the fund seek?

We solicit projects of all genres that address critical social and political issues; that will reach a broad audience; that include a progressive political analysis combining intellectual clarity with creative use of the medium; and that demonstrate an understanding of how the production will be used for social change organizing. We prioritize projects that give voice to marginalized communities and to those traditionally excluded from mainstream media, such as people of color, persons with disabilities, gays, lesbians, and transgender and bisexual persons.

Name some of the best known titles and/or artists Robeson has funded. What have been some of the distribution/exhibition paths of these projects?

FEX was one of the first foundations to provide support for social-issue films, such as the acclaimed *Harlan County USA*, *Tongues Untied*, and *Panama Deception*. Most recently, the Paul Robeson Fund has supported projects such as *The Uprising of 34*, *A Healthy Baby Girl*, *Golden Threads*, *Another Brother*, *The Double Life of Ernesto Gomez Gomez*, and *Blood Lines*.

All of the films mentioned have been aired on *P.O.V.* and have an extensive record of festival showings and prize awards. For the Paul Robeson Fund, the most important aspect of both their production and distribution history is that these projects have all been made in collaboration with grassroots organizations, and that they all incorporate innovative distribution initiatives to further the work of progressive organizations. For example, one of the funded projects' distribution strategy included a classroom-based study plan to connect its content with the school's lessons in media literacy, critical thinking, and oral history. Another project was shown during fundraisers and activist meetings, and in conjunction with letter-writing campaigns and petition drives for a grassroots organization.

What percentage of the Robeson Fund's overall budget goes towards film or video projects?

Around 75% of our grant-making monies goes to film and video projects. The remaining 25% goes to radio.

How many media awards are given out per year?

We award grants to approximately 24 to 30 film and video projects. The Paul Robeson Fund's annual grant-making budget averages $200,000.

What is the average size of a grant?

Grants usually range between $3,000 and $6,000. The maximum grant amount is $15,000.

What's the ratio of applicants to recipients?

The Robeson Fund is quite competitive. In 1998 we awarded 31 film and video grants out of 130 proposals received (approximately one out of four applicants received a grant).

Are there restrictions on applicants' qualifications?

The Robeson Fund does not fund film, video, and audio installations; festivals, conferences or special events; organizational projects for internal or promotional use; sociological or anthropological explorations that do not provide a strong political analysis; documentation of cultural events, personalities, or performances with little or no political relevance; general operating expenses of distribution companies; script development for dramatic features or radio dramas; student productions or other projects associated with a degree program; and productions originating in countries outside the U.S., unless the distribution strategy incorporates (in part) organizing in the United States.

You've stated Robeson funds projects in preproduction and distribution phases. Can a preproduction grantee apply for a distribution grant?

Applicants may submit only one project for consideration and may not be listed as producers or directors of any other project submitted to the fund during a given funding cycle. Film and video preproduction grantees may indeed apply for a distribution grant for the previously funded project during a future funding cycle.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.

The application deadline is May 15. Proposals are

CINEMA ARTS CENTRE

presents

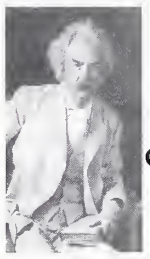
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Send VHS submissions to Lisa Carey, Director of Acquisitions

accepted beginning one month prior to the deadline. Notification of grant awards is made in late summer. The Application and Guidelines booklet can be obtained through the Funding Exchange by calling our office, or through our website.

Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used? Can the same individual apply for funds two years in a row?
There are no time-frame restrictions on the use of the grant. We request that grantees complete a Progress Report six months after the receipt of the grant. We also encourage grantees to keep us informed on the overall progress of the project on an ongoing basis.

Who makes the awards decisions? Can you name past panelists?
Staff pre-selects projects and the activist-advised grant-making panel selects the finalists. The panel then makes its recommendations to the Funding Exchange Board of Directors, which approves the allocation of grant monies to those projects.

The Robeson Fund grant-making panel involves grassroots activists, media activists, and mediamakers from all over the U.S. Our past panelists include Robert West, Curator of Film and Video at the Mint Museum of Art; Amber Hollibaugh, National Field Director of Women's Educational Services at the GMHC; Juanita Espinoza, Executive Director of Native Arts Circle; Gretchen Elsner-Sommer, Program Director at Women in the Director's Chair; and Karl Bruce Knapper, Robeson's representative to the FEX Board of Directors.

Tell us a little about the review process.
About 60% of all proposals make the first cut, and are then discussed over three days by the panel. Priorities include the use of the piece for progressive social change organizing; the creativity of the distribution strategy; the applicant's professional experience; the practicality of the fund-raising strategy; the demographics of the production team; financial need; and geographical representation.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
Grant seekers should read the guidelines carefully and do the necessary research when approaching funders. Know your funder and ask the relevant questions. In writing their proposals, grant seekers should be clear, concise, and specific. A diversified fundraising strategy, a realistic budget, and a thorough distribution strategy are very important in presenting a strong application. Sample material is also extremely important in our consideration of a proposal, particularly for pre-production requests. We recommend that media artists submit sample material that is the strongest in content, form, and production values.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
Submitting poor or inadequate sample materials; submitting proposals with unrealistic or incomplete budgets; submitting proposals that lack clarity, political commitment, and an understanding of the type of distribution models that the Robeson Fund seeks to fund.

What would people most be surprised to learn about the Funding Exchange and/or its founders?
The Funding Exchange model has inspired some of the newer progressive foundations, and our concern for involving activists in our grant-making has generated some of the most cutting-edge funding this country has seen.

Other foundations or grant-making organizations you admire and why.
Soros Documentary Fund, New World Foundation, Veatch, and Public Welfare, because they bring a progressive vision that allows communities to develop their own agenda.

If you weren't in the business of funding media, what would you be doing?
I would be making it full time.

Famous last words:
As technology continues to transform the way we produce, view, hear, and distribute media, we look forward to supporting new and exciting projects that push the boundaries and explore alternatives.

The 15 FEX Funds

Appalachian Community Fund, Knoxville, TN, (423) 525-5783; Bread & Roses Community Fund, Philadelphia, PA, (215) 731-1107; Chinook Fund, Denver, CO, (303) 455-6905; Crossroads Fund, Chicago, IL, (773) 227-7676; Fund for Southern Communities, Decatur, GA, (404) 292-7600; Haymarket People's Fund, Boston, MA, (617) 522-7676; Headwaters Fund, Minneapolis, MN, (612) 879-0602; Liberty Hill Foundation, Santa Monica, CA, (310) 453-3611; McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Portland, OR, (503) 289-1517; North Star Fund, New York, NY, (212) 620-9110; Vanguard Public Foundation, San Francisco, CA, (415) 487-2111; Wisconsin Community Fund, Madison, WI, (608) 251-6834; The People's Fund, Honolulu, HI, (808) 526-2441; Three Rivers Community Fund, Pittsburgh, PA, (412) 243-9250; Fund for Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA, (805) 962-9164.

Funder FAQ is profiles a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.

MEET VIVIANA BIANCHI,
ROBESON PROJECT DIRECTOR

and get your individual questions about the Robeson Fund answered in person at this month's Meet & Greet. See page 58 for details.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (APR. 1 FOR JUNE ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ANTI-FILM FESTIVAL, May, FL. Deadline: Early April. Founded in 1993, fest emphasizes films "that challenge status quo, present difficult ideas & feature social, political or structural analysis." Organizers of fest define it as: "'Anti-Film Festival', not 'anti-film'," in opposition to fests as gala marketing affairs w/ corporate sponsorship, etc. Seek marginal, obscure minority of filmmakers w/ taste for poetry, danger & complete disregard for market. Entries should be under 15 min. & completed w/in last yr. Cash prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", super 8. Entry fee: $25. Contact: AFF, Abel Kleinbaum, fest director, Alliance IFP/S, 927 Lincoln Rd., Ste. 119, Miami Beach, FL 33139; (305) 538-8242; fax: 532-9710; Allianc1@bigfoot.com; www.alliance-cinema.org

BRAINWASH MOVIES FESTIVAL, June 30-July 2, CA. Deadline: May 1. All works must be original & less than 13 min. Tapes will not be returned unless you incl. SASE. Formats: 16mm, VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $30. Contact: BMF, Shelby Toland, Brainwash Movies, Box 23302, Oakland, CA 94623; (415) 273-1545; shelby @brainwashm.com; www.brainwashm.com

CHICAGO ALT.FILM FESTIVAL, June 7-11, IL. Deadline: March 10. 3rd annual fest is "Chicago's premiere film festival of American independent filmmakers," celebrating the best in indie films by emerging & established American filmmakers. Fest provides forum for exhibition, recognition & education. Films submitted for competition must be a Chicago premiere. Awards: best feature, best director, best script, best performance by an actor or actress, best debut performance, best cinematography, best short & best doc. The Founder's Award will be given to most promising Midwest filmmaker. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $50 (features & docs, 75 min. & over); $25 (shorts & docs, under 60 min.); $30 (docs). Entry form avail. online. Contact: CAFF, Entries, 3430 N. Lake Shore Drive, Ste. 19N, Chicago, IL 60657; (773) 525-4559; fax: 327-8669; chialtfilm@aol.com; www.members.aol.com/chialtfilm/fest

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, August 4-10, IL. Deadlines: April 15 (early); June 1 (final). Fest presents underground, independent & experimental films & videos that dissent radically in form, technique &/or content from the "Indiewood" mainstream. We seek features, shorts, docs, animation & experimental films that defy & transcend commercial expectations. Cash awards in these cats: narrative feature, narrative short, doc short, doc feature, experimental, animation, audience choice & "made-in-Chicago." Formats 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $20 (early), $35 (final). Contact: CUFF, 3109 North Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60618, (773) 327-3456; fax: 327-3464; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org

CINE ACCION FESTIVAL !CINE LATINO!, Sept. 14-17, San Francisco, CA Sept. 22-24, Berkeley, CA. Deadline: April 28. Fest's mission is to foster Latino self representation in the media arts & is a non-profit membership organization committed to the production & exhibition of film & video which gives voice to the complexity & diversity of the Latino experience. Past festivals have included tributes to Mexican director, Gabriel Figueroa, Cuban director, Tomas Gutierrez & actors Rita Moreno & Cheech Marin plus many up & coming filmmakers from across the nation. All film & video works by, for & about Latinos & Chicanos in U.S. as well as works that originate in Latin America & the Caribbean are encouraged to submit. Fest is open to all lengths & genres of works completed after Jan. 1996. English subtitles strongly recommended. Fest also seeks works by for & about youth for use in our free youth screenings. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (non Cine Accion members; cost incl. a 1 yr. membership), $10 (members).Contact: CAFCL, Rosalia Valencia, Festival Director, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 553-8140; fax: 553-8137; cineaccion@aol.com; www.cineaccion.com

CLEARWATER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 8-16, FL. Deadline: March 15. Fest is seeking feature length, shorts & docs & is accepting films that educate, entertain & enlighten for various cats: children/family, action adventure, drama, comedy, mystery/suspense, sci-fi/fantasy & foreign (subtitled or in English). Prints must be avail. by deadline to be selected for awards presentations. Formats: 16mm, DVD, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (shorts); $35 (docs); $50 (features). Contact: CIFF, Box 537, Clearwater, FL 33757; (727) 442-3317; fax: 443-6753; info@clearwaterfilm festival.com; www.clearwaterfilmfestival.com

DANCES WITH FILMS, June 23-29, CA. Deadlines: March 31 (early); April 21 (final). 3rd annual competitive fest showcases more than a dozen features & shorts. Fest is one of the country's more unique: "solely geared to the true independents," with stipulations that all films accepted have unknown directors, actors & producers. Entry fee: $50. Contact: DWF, Warner Hollywood Studios, 1041 N. Formosa Ave., Pickford Bldg., Rm 203, West Hollywood, CA 90046; (323) 850-2929 fax: 850-2928; info@danceswithfilms.com; www.DancesWithFilms.com

DA VINCI FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 15-16, OR Deadlines: April 20 (early), May 31 (final). Fest now accepting short submissions not exceeding 60 min. in length. Cats: narrative, animation, doc, music video, etc. Special section for young artists (kindergarten through high school) and colleges/higher ed artists. Formats: Beta SP, 3/4", VHS, S-VHS, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $5-$20. For entry forms & more info contact: DVFVF, Box 1536, Corvallis, OR 97339; (541) 757-6363; fax: 754-7590; davincifilm@buzzlink.com; www.davinci-days.org

DOMINIQUE DUNNE YOUNG FIMMAKERS VIDEO/FILM FESTIVAL, May 13, CO. Deadline: April 15. 30th year of int'l competition for originally produced videos by high school students & college freshmen; open to any student currently enrolled in high school grades 9-12 or college freshman. Entries must be sole work of student filmmaker(s), w/ 2/3 original content. Cats: dramatic/narrative (3-24 min.), experimental (3-12 min.) & stop action/computer animated. 3 cash awards given in dramatic/narrative & experimental cats; 1st prize $100, 2nd prize $75, 3rd prize $50. Format & preview on VHS & S-VHS. Entry fee: $12 & SASE. Contact: DDYFVFF, David Manley, Fest Coordinator, Fountain Valley School of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO 80911; (719) 392-2657; fax: 391-9039; dmanley@fvs.edu

GOLDEN SHOWER VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 16-17, TX. Deadline: April 28. 6th annual fest looking for experimental, narrative, animation, exploitative, doc, stolen & original video or film. Prizes: 1st, lowrider bike; 2nd, mini accordion; 3rd, Lucha Libre (wrestling) gear. Format: VHS only (shorts or features). Entry fee: $10 cash only, no checks or money orders. No entries will be returned. An official entry form must accompany all entries; avail. for download from website. Contact: GSVF, Adam Rocha, 8039 Callaghan Rd PMB #611, San Antonio, TX 78230; (512) 457-8780; voicemail: (210) 885-5888; arocha@texas.net; www.arocha.home.texas.net

HARDSHARE INDEPENDENT FILMFEST, April 28-29, AR. Deadline: March 10 (early); March 24 (final). Hardshare visual artists collective presents its 1st int'l short film fest. Organizers are seeking short films & videos (40 min. or less), completed after Jan. 1, 1998, in any style or genre. Special consideration to works presenting thought-provoking material. Fest is designed to educate local audiences about new & cutting edge cinema & to nurture a creative climate for the region's indie filmmakers. All entries eligible for Audience Choice awards. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Incl. SASE for return of tape. Incl. stamped postcard for acknowledgment. Entry fees: $20 (early); $30 (final) Send tape, fee, entry form, synopsis, production credit list & two publicity photos to: HIFF, Attn: Susan Hutchcroft, Box, 123 Winslow, AR 72959; (501) 634-5901; hardsharefilmfest@yahoo.com

HOT SPRINGS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-22, AR. Deadline: April 28. 9th annual fest accepting nonfiction film submissions for one of the country's premier nonfiction film celebrations. Noncompetitive fest honors films & filmmakers each year in beautiful Hot Springs, AR. More than 70 films are screened, incl. current year's Academy Award nominees in nonfiction cats & Int'l Doc Association honorees. Special guest scholars, filmmakers, & celebrities participate in humanities forums & lectures. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (domestic); $35 (int'l). Contact: HSDFF, Melanie Masino, 819 Central Ave.,Box 6450, Hot Springs, AR 71902; (501) 321-4747; fax: 321-0211; hsdff@DocuFilmInst.org; www.DocuFilmInst.org

INTERCOM INT'L COMMUNICATION FILM & VIDEO COMPETITION, July, IL. Deadline: April 28. Oldest int'l industrial film & video fest in U.S., now in 36th year. Aim is "to showcase enormous technical & creative energy behind sponsored prods. & to highlight importance of media arts in business communications." Industrial, sponsored & educational prods. eligible. Cats incl. dental science, doc, drug abuse, educational, environment/ecology, fashion/music video, fundraising, human relations, medicine, personal counseling, public relations, public service & info, religion, research, safety, sales/marketing, sports/rec., training, travel/transportation & video news release. Special achievement awards to acting, cinematography/videography, computer graphics/animation, directing, editing, graphics, humor, music, special effects & writing. Awards incl. Gold & Silver Hugos to top prods. in each cat. Gold & silver plaques may also be awarded in each competitive cat. Entries must be produced between preceding year & date of entry. All formats accepted. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35-$200. Contact: Intercom, 32 West Randolph St., Ste 600, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 425-9400; fax: 425-0944; filmfest@suba.com; www.chicago.ddbn.com/filmfest

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH VIDEO COMPETITION, June, CA. Deadline: April 15. 7th annual competition accepts entries on Jewish themes from every level & cat of prod, incl. audio & interactive media. Awards: Jurors' Choice (share $1,500); Jurors' Citation (share $1,000), Directors' Choice (share $500); Honorable Mention (certificate & screenings); Lindheim Award for program that best explores political & social relationship between Jews & other ethnic & religious groups. Cash awards & nationwide screenings. Winners also screened at Magnes Museum for 2 months. Eligible films produced w/in preceding 3 1/2 yrs & be under 100 min. Formats: all original formats acceptable. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry fees: $30 (under 30 min.), $40 (over 30 min. Contact: IJVC, Bill Chayes, Video Competition Coordinator, Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705; (510) 549-6952; fax: 549-6941; jewsvideo@aol.com; www.jewishfilms.com

LAKE ARROWHEAD FILM FESTIVAL, May 5-7, CA. Deadline: April 1. Lake Arrowhead is known as Hollywood's original playground. Also, the area incl. a beautiful four screen theater, the Blue Jay Cinema, and many other possible screening sites, a first class resort & twice the room for the festival to expand in the years to follow. Only 90 min. from L.A., fest is a great asset for workshops & increased attendance of filmmakers, studio executives & distributors. Cats: feature, animation, doc, short. Awards in each cat. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Beta, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 Contact: LAFF, Gen. Delivery, Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352; (909) 307-1074; filmfestival@pe.net; www.arrowheadfilmfest.com

MAINE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 7-16, ME. Deadline: April 30. Non-competitive fest is primarily seeking feature length films in 35mm. Shorter works & videos may be considered, but will probably not be accepted unless they were shot in Maine or have a significant Maine theme or focus. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm., 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (non-refundable). Contact: MIFF, 10 Railroad Square, Waterville, ME 04901; (207) 861-8138; fax: 872-5502; info@miff.org; www.miff.org

MARIN COUNTY SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, July 1-4, CA. Deadline: March 17 (early); April 14 (late). Fest runs as part of the Marin Co. Fair w/ films screening daily. Cats: narrative, doc, animated, experimental & family. Up to $2,400 in awards. Maximum running time is 30 min. Films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, animation. Awards: Up to $2,400 in awards Formats: 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: domestic $25 (early), $35 (late); int'l $35 (early), $40 (late). Contact: MCSFF, Marin Co. Fair, Ave. of the Flags, San Rafael, CA 94903; ph/fax: (415) 499-6400; pgoodin@marin.org; www.marinfair.org

THE METHOD FEST, June 16-23, CA. Deadline: March 1 (early); April 10 (late). Now in its 2nd year & named for the Stanislavski Method, fest highlights great performances in U.S. & int'l independent film, presenting 10 to 12 features, plus shorts. A variety of awards & prizes will be given for: best actor, actress, screenplay. Cats: feature, short. Awards: Feature Films (over 40 min.): best picture; best director; best actor; best actress; best supporting actor; best supporting actress; best screenplay; best character performance; Short Films (40 min. or less): best picture; best actor; best actress. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, digital. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: features $35 (early), $50 (late); shorts: $25 (early), $40 (late). Contact: MF, Franken Enterprises, 880 Apollo St. Ste. 337, El Segundo, CA 90245; (310) 535-9230; fax: 535-9128; wrldclssprts@earthlink.net; www.methodfest.com

MOUNTAINFILM, May 26-29, CO. Deadline: March 1. Fest is "dedicated to sustaining an appreciation for the uniqueness of the mountain environment & to the arts, politics & adventures that set these regions apart." Fest invites work of any length & on any subject. Cats: best animated, historical, portrait of a people, exploration, mountaineering, environmental, nature. Awards: Two cash prizes, special jury commendation. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $40. Contact: MF, Box 1088, 300 S. Pine St., Telluride, CO. 81435; (970) 728-4123; fax: 728-6458; info@mountainfilm.org; www.mountainfilm.org

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 28-30, IN. Deadline: April 17. NCFF is organized in partnership w/ The Children's Museum of Indianapolis & other Children's Museums nationwide. It aims to encourage films & videos written, directed & produced by youth (9-18), empowering children & young adults w/ their own voice & vision to promote better communication & understanding between generations. Fest provides forum for self-expression & highlights issues of importance to young adults & children, reaching out to youth of all races, religions, cultures & those who are economically, physically & mentally challenged. Awards & scholarships are given: Elementary (1st.) $1,000, Creative excellence. $500 Middle School (1st.) Creative excellence $2,000 $1000 High School (1st.) $5,000, Creative excellence $2,500. Formats: Hi-8, S-VHS, VHS, 3/4", Beta SP, super 8, 16mm & DV. (If using VHS, record in SP.) Preview on VHS. For details of your nearest participating museum contact: NCFF, Ieva Grundy, Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Box 3000, Indianapolis, IN 46206; (877) KIDSFILM; fax: 464-1360; ncff@childrensfilmfest.org; www.childrensfilmfest.org

NATIVE AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL Nov. 2-6, NY. Deadline: April 7. 11th annual fest features films, videos & radio programs of all genres & web projects & CD-ROMs from North, Central & South America & Hawaii. Fest showcases productions by Native media makers, community projects & works reflecting Native perspectives. Works must be made after 1997. Preview on VHS (preferably NTSC); all formats screened. No entry fee. Contact: NAFVF, Nat'l Museum of the American Indian, One Bowling Green, NY, NY 10004; (212) 514-3730; fax: 514-3725; www.fi.edu/nmai_film+video

NOMAD VIDEOFILM FESTIVAL, June tour: WA, OR, CA. Deadline: April 1. Founded in1992, this Pacific coast touring venue (Seattle, Portland, San Francisco & other cities) incl. short, experimental videos/films using mixed media formats. We favor audacious work that risks strong personal belief in the subject matter. No cash prizes, trophies, kitchen knives, commodity coupons, or certificates. Winners receive: invaluable written audience response to their work from every city on the tour plus media reviews, programs, posters. This year's theme, "real & faux documentaries," explores docudramas, mocumentaries, docufictions & any hybrids mediating the actual & the imaginal. Maximum duration: 20 min. Formats: Mini-DVD, Digital-8, Hi-8, S-VHS, VHS. Preview on VHS. Fest incorporates hi-tech video/data projection. Entry fee: $15. Applics./vision statement, Contact: NVF, Vertical Pool, attn: Sylvie Pickering, Box 7518, Berkeley CA 94707; (510) 464-4640; vpool@sirius.com; www.verticalpool.com/vstuff.html

ONE REEL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 1-4, WA. Deadline: May 1. 5th annual fest, held during Seattle's Bumbershoot Arts Festival, welcomes all styles & genres of films up to 30 min. Awards: $1000 juried prize. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10. Contact: ORSFF, 1725 Westlake Ave. N., Ste 202, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 281-7788; fax: 281-7799; filmfest@onereel.org; www.bumbershoot.org

PALM BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 24-30, FL. Deadline: April 13. 5th annual fest was created to encourage & showcase innovative, short independent works from new, independent & low budget film & videomakers. Send VHS tapes of original film & video works of 30 min. or less in categories of fiction, doc, music video, experimental, & animation. Please incl. SASE if you would like tapes returned. Award prizes include raw filmstock & equipment. Cats: fiction, documentary, experimental, music video & animation under 30 min. Awards: Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15. Contact: WPBIFF, Ariana Bearce, 222 Lakeview Ave., Ste. 160-284, West Palm Beach, FL 33401; (561) 802-3029; fax: 655-4190; keelyflow@flinet.com; www.wpbiff.org

SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, July 20-Aug. 7, CA. Deadline: March 15. 20th anniverary extravaganza! Estab. in 1980, noncompetitive fest (under annual theme Independent Filmmakers: Looking at Ourselves) showcases new Independent American Jewish-subject cinema & diverse selection of foreign films. Fest presents dramatic, doc, experimental & animated shorts & features about Jewish history, culture & identity. Filmmakers need not be Jewish; films selected by subject. Special programs vary yearly & have included Russian, Sephardic & Latino programs. 35-40 films showcased each yr. Cats: experimental, short, animation, feature, documentary, Jewish. Awards: Audience Award Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SFJFF, Janis Plotkin, Director, or Sam Ball, Associate Director, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-0556; fax: 548-0536; Jewishfilm@aol.com; www.sfjff.org

STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL, July 19-29, NY. Deadline: April 1. Staller Center for the Arts presents 5th annual fest Cats: features, shorts, doc, animation. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (shorts, up to 30

Tribute to the Unknown Filmmaker

Billing itself as "the festival for the truly independent," LA-based Dances With Films screens work which have no "known" directors, actors, or producers. (A "known" individual is defined as someone who can raise finance via their name alone or can "open doors that might otherwise stay closed"). The three-year-old festival, which features 12 full-length narrative films and 16 shorts at this year's event, has seen previous entrants attain distribution and other fest success. This cross-pollination gives indie credit to more commercial festivals while giving very new filmmakers a chance at a wider audience. See listing.



min.); $50 (feature, over 30 min.) Entry form avail. online. Contact: SBFF, Staller Center for the Arts, SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794; (631) 632-7233; fax: 632-7354; festival@stallercenter.com; www.stallercenter.com/festival

STUDENT MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL, Rochester, NY. Deadline: June 30. Founded in '88, fest organized entirely by & for students. All tapes reviewed by peer committees of students of time-based media. Fest seeks wide variety of interesting & challenging work that demonstrates concerns of students of all ages. All genres & subjects welcome; works must be completed w/in previous 2 yrs & no more than 28 min. Selected tapes incl. in 12-wk exhibit in Visual Studies Workshop Gallery & cablecast on RCTV public access. Fest also becomes part of extensive archives of Visual Studies Workshop Galleries traveling exhibitions program. About 20 works selected each yr for audiences of over 400. Cats: Any style or genre. Formats: DV, 8mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. No entry fee, (return postage necessary). Contact: SMARTfest, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676; fax: 442-1992; info@vsw.org; www.vsw.org

UC DAVIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 16-18, CA. Deadline: April 2 (early); April 9 (final). Fest a.k.a. the Golden Calf Awards "provides a showcase for student films & independent films from all over the world & stimulates local interest in the film medium." Cats: feature, short, animation, doc. Awards: cash & non-cash prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 (early); $25 (final). Contact: UCDIFF, Leah Abriani, Campus Cinema, 37 Memorial Union, Davis, CA 95616; (530) 752-7570; fax: 752-8543; campuscinema@yahoo.com; www.asucd.ucdavis.edu/cinema/Film_Festival/film_festival.html

Foreign

ART FILM FESTIVAL, June 23-30, Slovak Republic (Trencianske Teplice). Deadline: April 7. Competitive fest showcasing films about art & artists. Cats: Art fiction (art feature films, new ways of artistic expression), Artefacts (doc films on art & artists, short art films), On the Road (student films on art, visual experiments). Awards: Cash & non-cash prizes Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Art Film, Koventna 8, 811 03 Bratislava, Slovak Republic; 011 421 7 5441 9481, 9479; fax: 421 7 5441 9372, 1679; festival@artfilm.sk; www.artfilm.sk

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, DIRECTOR'S FORTNIGHT, May 10-21. For the 11th consecutive year, the IFP is serving as official U.S. representive for the Director's Fortnight. If you have a fiction feature produced after Jan. 1999 & would like to submit it for consideration for the Director's Fortnight, please call Robert Keller at the IFP for guidelines & application form. (212) 465-8200; 465-8525; www.ifp.org

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FILM FESTIVAL: THE FEMININE LOOK: June, Algarve, Brazil. Deadline: May 15. Showcasing films by women directors from around the world that were based on or inspired by published works—novels, short stories, plays, poems, etc.—written by women. Subtitles needed for films in languages other than Portugese, English or French. Special series: Roots, Visions of the Self, Women by Women & One-Minute Gems. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview in VHS. Film credits, date, contact info & literary work on which film is based, along w/ brief bio of its author. Contact: CIFF, Hobo films, 241 W. 36th St., Ste. 15, NY, NY, 10018; (212) 594-1883; cinemalgarve@aol.com; hobofilm@aol.com

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS, June 20-26, Austria. Deadline: April 1. All noncommercial films & videos qualified to participate. Please enclose short description of film. Film/video must be completed w/in last two years. Duration of film is limited to 30 min. Films rated by int'l jury. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: "Ebenseer Bear" in gold, silver & bronze. The Austrian Science & Art Minister Prize: AT 3,000. "Special Award for Best Film" of competition: Author (or one member of the team) will receive invitation to participate free of charge in festival the following year. Special award for best experimental film. UNICA-Medaille Certificate for every participant. Formats: 16mm, super 8, VHS, S-VHS, 3/4". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: FON, Erich Riess, Goumbergstrasse 82, A-4060 Linz, Austria; 011 43 732 673 693; fax: 43 732 673 693; eva-video@netway.at; www.members.pgv.at/filmamateuere/ebensee.html

HUESCA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, June 5-13, Spain. Deadline: April 1. Founded in 1973, competitive showcase for Spanish & foreign short films has aim of "the dissemination of image as a contribution to the better knowledge & fraternity among the nations of the world." Awards: "Ciudad de Huesca" Golden Danzante (1,000,000 ptas., $6,165); Silver Danzante (500,000 ptas., $3,080); Bronze Danzante (250,000 ptas., $1,540). Other awards: Award "Sociedad General de Autores y Editores" for best script; Award "Francisco Garcia De Paso" to short film that best emphasizes human values; Award "Casa de America" to best new director (their first or second production in 16mm or 35mm). No thematic restrictions, except no films dealing w/ tourism or publicity. Entries must be unawarded in other fests in Spain, produced in 1999 or 2000 & be under 30 min. Of approx. 400 entries received each year, about 170 shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: HISFF, Jose Mana Escriche, Comite de Direccion, Apartado 174, 22080 Huesca, Spain; 011 34 9 74 21 25 82; fax: 34 9 74 21 00 65; huescafest@tsai.es; www.huesca-filmfestival.com; www.huesca-filmfestival.com/

HUNGARIAN MULTICULTURAL CENTER FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-25, Hungary. Deadline: April 12 (postmark). 4th annual fest accepts film, video (PAL) & animated works. Incl. English text of work & a brief bio, for PR & program book. Work must be under 30 min. in length & been completed in 1998/1999. Cats: animation, feature, short, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC), incl. SASE for return. Entry fee: $35. Contact: HMSFVF, Hungarian Multicultural Center, Inc., 6723 Forest Lane, Dallas, TX 75230; tel/fax: (972) 308-8191; bszechy@mail.smu.edu

JERUSALEM FILM FESTIVAL, July 13-22, Israel. Deadline: April 15. 17th annual fest will screen over 175 films in various cats, incl. Cats: feature, short, retro, doc, experimental, int'l cinema, short, animation, avant garde, U.S. indies, Israeli & Mediterranean cinema, Jewish themes, restorations & classics. Must be Israeli premieres. Awards incl: Wolgin Awards for Israeli cinema, Lipper Award for best Israeli script; (int'l competition: Wim van Leer In the Spirit of Freedom Award, Jewish Theme Award). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: JFF, Lia van Leer, Director, Box 8561, Derech Hebron, Jerusalem, Israel 91083; 011 9722 672 4131; fax: 9722 673 3076; jer_cine@inter.net.il; www.jer-cine.org.il





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FESTIVALS

KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 5-15, Czech Republic. Deadline: April. Annual FIAPF-recognized competitive fest, founded in 1946. Held at one of world's oldest & most famous spas, fest is one of largest film events in central Europe. Feature competition & doc competition (feature-length & shorts) accompanied by several noncompetitive sections. Competition entries must have be completed since Jan. 1 of previous yr & not have competed in other int'l fests. Awards: Grand Prize of Crystal Globe, Special Jury Award, Best Director Prize, Best Actor/Actress & Lifetime Achievement Award. Format: 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: KVIFF, Jiri Bartoska, Panska 1, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic; 011 420 2 24 23 54 13; fax: 420 2 24 23 34 08; program@iffkv.cz; www.iffkv.cz

NEW ZEALAND FILM FESTIVALS, July 7-23 (Auckland); July 14-30 (Wellington); July 21-August 6 (Dunedin); July 26-August 12 (Christchurch), New Zealand. Deadline: April 30. July is film festival time in New Zealand. Fests are presented every winter by the New Zealand Film Festival, a charitable trust set up by the NZ Federation of Film Societies, a professional, non-profit, non-political incorporated society w/ the aims of fostering interest in the motion picture & encouraging high standards of motion picture appreciation. From the same core program of approximately 120 features & as many shorts, the organizers present major fest in Wellington & Auckland & "selected highlights" programmes in the South Island cities of Christchurch & Dunedin. A further reduced programme travels to six provincial cities. Over two decades these fests have constituted a superb platform from which to introduce many notable films to New Zealand audiences. In 1999 fest audiences exceeded 200,000. Those submitting films for consideration are asked to indicate availability by location. Most filmmakers opt to screen in both the Wellington & Auckland Film Festivals, but this is not a prerequisite to inclusion in either. Formats: 35mm, 70mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: NZFF, Box 9544, Marion Square, Wellington, New Zealand 6001; 011 64 4 385 0162; fax: 64 4 801 7304; festival@enzedff.co.nz; www.enzedff.co.nz/

ODENSE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 14-19, Denmark. Deadline: April 1. 15th annual fest is organized by city of Odense & Danish Film Institute. It is designed to screen unusual short films w/ an original & imaginative sense of creative delight as found in the works of Hans Christian Anderson. Cats: experimental-imaginative & fairy tale. Films must not exceed 45 min. Film must have been completed on or after May 1, 1999. Educational, advertising & tourist films cannot compete. Awards: Grand Prix, most imaginative, most surprising & special jury prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Contact: OIFF, Vindegade 18, DK-5000, Odense C, Denmark; 011 45 6613 1372 x.4044; fax: 45 6591 4318; HN@Odense.dk; www.filmfestival.dk

SÃO PAULO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL Aug. 1-6, Brazil. Deadline April 14. Fest aims to present films w/ Jewish subjects to improve the cultural exchange & to reflect about this specific genre. Includes international competition & special programs. Award given for Best Jewish Film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video, Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SPJFF, Daniela Wasserstein, Fest Dir. A Hebraica, Rua hungria 1000-01455.000, São Paulo SP, Brazil; tel/fax 011 55 11 818 8809, fcjsp@hebraica.org.br; www.fcjsp.com.br

ST. PETERSBURG "MESSAGE TO MAN" FESTIVAL, July 15-22, Russia. Deadline: April 10. Int'l fest accepts feature doc (up to 120 min.), short doc (up to 40 min.), short fiction (up to 60 min.), animated films (up to 60 min.). Program incl. best debut (1st professional as well as student films), int'l competition & special programs. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1999. Cash awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on 1/2" VHS (PAL, SECAM, NTSC). Contact: SPM-TOMF, Mikhail Litviakov, 12 Karavannaya 191011, St. Petersburg, Russia; 011 7 812 235 2660; fax: 7 812 235 3995; centaur@spb.cityline.ru; www.message_to_man.ru; Contact in US: Anne Borin, c/o Donnell Media Center, 10 W. 53rd St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 586-6367; fax: 586-6391.

TORONTO SUPER 8 FILM FESTIVAL, June 23-25, Canada. Deadline: March 31. Fest dedicated to small gauge films, showing a wide range or work by first-time filmmakers & seasoned supereighters. Formats: super 8, VHS (shot predominantly on super 8). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $5. Contact: TS8FF, 423 Shaw St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6J 2X4; (416) 537-2256; coldsore@interlog.com; www.interlog.com/~coldsore/

TORONTO WORLDWIDE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL June 5-11, Canada. Deadline: March 15. 6th annual fest is one of top five short film festivals in the world according to the *NY Times* & rates inclusion on its list of festivals for the Oscars. Awards: Best Film in animation, drama, computer animation, doc, experimental & children's cats. Cash awards: best int'l & best Canadian film. Films must be under 40 min. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Films must be completed w/in two yrs. prior to deadline. No entry fee. Contact: TWSFF, Brenda Sherwood, Executive Director, 60 Atlantic Ave., Ste. #106, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6K 1X9; (416) 535-8506, 535-8342; twsff@idirect.com

VANCOUVER QUEER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, August 10-20, Canada. Deadline: April 15. 12th annual fest now seeking film & video submissions of short & feature length docs, narrative/non-narratives, animation & everything which is of interest to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, or transgendered peoples. Fest incl. screenings, parties, workshops, and galas & is a forum for the development of dialogue between t/l/b/g people of all ethnicities, cultures, ages, abilities & gender definitions. Awards: Gerry Brunet Memorial Award ($400), to the most inspirational short work of any genre or format by a Canadian artist currently residing in B.C. Only works completed after Jan. 1999 are eligible. All submissions must incl. an entry form avail. from web site. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4" U-Matic, 1/2" VHS (no Beta). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: VQFVF, Out On Screen, Box 521, 1027 Davie St.., Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6E 4L2; (604) 844-1615; fax: 844-1698; submit@outonscreen.com; www.outonscreen.com

VILA DO CONDE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, July 6-11, Portugal. Deadline: April 23. 8th annual fest accepting films under 40 min. produced in 1999 or 2000. Cats: fiction, doc, animation. Awards: Grand prize in each category of a trophy, diploma & PTE 500,000 ($2,560); Prize of the Audience, trophy & PTE 300,000 ($1,530). If film has dialogue in languages other than English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese & it is not subtitled in any of these languages, then incl. translated script. Extracts of accepted films may be broadcast on TV channels for fest publicity. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry form required & avail. on website. Contact: VDCISFF, Auditorio Municipal, Praca da Republica, 4480-715 Vila do Conde, Portugal; 011 351 52 641644; fax: 351 52 642871; isffviladoconde@mailtelepac.pt; www.ficm-vc.bsi.net

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. THE INDEPENDENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., APR. 1 FOR JUNE ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

FIRST TEEN IMPROV MOVIE CONTEST: Join moviemakers in NY, MA IL & IA to develop art of improvising a movie in one or two days. Use our MOVIExperience format or your own curriculum. Cash prizes from Second City & others. Include w/ entry form your storyboard, visual proof that teens are behind the camera & check for $50 to Group Creativity Projects (nonprofit), 1029 Federal, Belchertown, MA 01007. Dave Shepherd, Coordinator: (413) 256-1991.

FLICKS ON 66 "WILD WEST DIGITAL SHOOTOUT"—Ten-Minute Scripts. Accepting 10-page scripts for production. Ten finalists come to Albuquerque, during the week of July 14-22 to shoot, edit & screen their movie while competing for the Palm de Grease. Award: digital video camera & editing equipment. Deadline: April 1. Entry fee: $35. Applic. info: Flicks on 66, Box 7038, Albuquerque, NM 87194; fax: (888) 837-9289; info@flickson66.com; www.FLICKSon66.com

HEART OF FILM SCREENPLAY COMPETITION Call for entries. Two cats: feature length adult/mature themes & feature length children/family themes. Awards: cash prizes; participation in Heart of Film Mentorship Program; air fare (up to $500) & accommodations to attend Heart of Film Screenwriters Conference Oct. 1-4; & Heart of Film Bronzed Award. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: May 15. For info: (800) 310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Establ. to give you experience, feedback, direction etc. as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer or development company sit up & take notice. You may enter a one-page synopsis of a screenplay you already have written, or a screenplay you intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, valued at $299, plus a free Script Detail of the screenplay of your choice valued at $150, both compliments of LA's The Source World Wide Scriptservice. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entry-form.html

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature-length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ entry fee $40 payable to NTV, 21 Central Park West, Ste. 1T, New York, NY 10023.

SCRIPTAPALOOZA is a company that not only champions the talented writer, but takes that writer beyond just prize money. Creates golden opportunities for winning writers to possibly be discovered, get representation, have their script optioned, or to sell it outright. First deadline (March 1 postmark): $40; final deadline (April 15 postmark): $45. For rules, guidelines & application: www.scriptapalooza.com; Scriptapalooza, 7775 Sunset Blvd., PMB # 200, Hollywood, CA 90046.

16th ANNUAL IDA DISTINGUISHED DOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS COMPETITION Cats: feature, short, David A. Wolper student doc., limited series, strand program, T.V. magazine segment, ABCNEWS Videosource award & Pare Lorentz award. Winners are honored at 16th Annual Awards Gala on Oct. 27 & screened at Doc Fest, Oct. 28. Early bird deadline w/ discount April 15; final deadline May 15. For entry forms: (310) 284- 8422 x. 68; ida@artnet.net.; www.documentary.org

YOUNG FILM COMPOSERS COMPETITION: Turner Classic Movies (TCM) cable network announces partnership w/ *Film Music* magazine to host the Young Film Composers Competition, to give young composers the rare opportunity to compose & record a musical score for a silent film in the TCM library. MP3.com, an online digital music destination, will be the exclusive point for contest entries. Composers should visit www.turnerclassicmovies.com/music, for entry form that allows them to submit a demo score for 90-second silent movie clip. This official contest site will contain links to MP3.com, where artists can sign up for a free web page & upload audio files of their demo for review by a select team of music industry professionals. 20 finalists selected. Grand prize winner selected in May 2000, will have opportunity to compose & record score for a to-be-announced silent film. Deadline: March 8; www.mp3.com

Conferences • Workshops

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE (formerly Gowanus Arts Exchange) will present their next film & video showing in their Independent Film & Video Series Sunday, Mar. 19 at 6 pm—an evening of films/videos by or about women, as part of our Women's Festival.

DIRECTOR'S FORTNIGHT, CANNES FILM FESTIVAL: For the 11th consecutive year, the Independent Feature Project is serving as official U.S. representive for the Director's Fortnight (May 10-21). If you have a fiction feature produced after Jan. 1999 & would like to submit it for consideration for the Director's Fortnight, please call Robert Keller at the IFP for guidelines & application form. (212) 465-8200; fax: 465-8525; www.ifp.org

FROM TODAY: A CONFERENCE OF ELECTRONICALLY MEDIATED DOCUMENTARY WORK. March 15-17, Providence, RI. Hosted by Brown University's Scholarly Technology Group, From Today is conference for doc producers & publishers focusing on new technologies for fieldwork, production & distribution. Conference will include panel discussions & presentations of new doc work as well as practical seminars addressing techniques & strategies facilitated by electronic tools. Conference seeks participation from anyone interested in presenting or discussing their own electronically mediated doc work. For more info: www.stg.brown.edu/conferences/ fromtoday; fromtoday@brown.edu; (401) 863-9313.

"TUCSON 2000"—The Alliance for Community Media's 2000 international conference & trade show, July 12-15. Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson, Arizona. For more info, contact ACM, 666 11th St., NW, Ste. 740, Washington, DC, 20001, or call (202) 393-2650.

Films • Tapes Wanted

AIF SHOWING INDEPENDENT FEATURES & SHORTS: Join the festival now! Show your film to 1.1 million potential viewers daily. AIF is streaming independent films via Broadcast.com, in their entirety, regardless of format or length. www.alwaysif.com

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 531-7623; www.shortfilmz.com

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info: (323) 466-FILM or 461-2020 x. 117.

ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in experimental, abstract & doc categories. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 1335 Huron River Dr. #19, Ypsilanti, MI 48197; anomalousvideo@hotmail.com

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media incl. video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787; www.icsp.net/arc

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for 2000 video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resumé, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

ATOM FILMS is an innovative, short-film distribution & marketing company seeking high-quality live action, animation & digital short films for Broadcast & Cable Television, home video, DVD, internet, hospitality, theatrical & educational markets. We are looking for films in any genre w/ length of 30 min. or less. Films must have all clearance & rights for commercial distribution in order to be considered by Atom films. Send submissions on VHS, NTSC, PAL, or SECAM to Atom Films, Attn: Acquisitions, 80 South Washington, Ste. 303, Seattle, WA 98104: (206) 264-2735; info@atomfilms.com; www.atomfilms.com. Tapes will not be returned.

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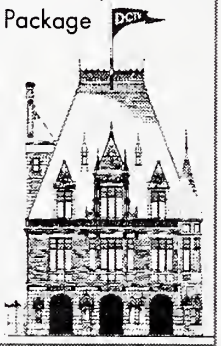
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OPPORTUNITIES

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@pce.net

BALLYHOO!: television show is dedicated soley to the promotion & exploration of independent films. Each episode weaves together short films, local filmmaker interviews & an exciting event or activity hosted by celebrity Anne Deason. Ballyhoo is currently airing in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Malibu, Orlando, Tampa & Austin (approx. 2.5 million viewers.) Ballyhoo celebrated its two-year anniversary in May of this year. Ballyhoo is accepting films & video's under 30 min. Submit VHS tape & return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Ballyhoo, 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803 (407) 898-0504.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE (formerly Gowanus Arts Exchange) is accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for the Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre or subject matter. Deadline: On-going. Send tapes & SASE to: The Ind. Film & Video Series, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018.

CIN(E)-POETRY FESTIVAL accepting short poetry or literary films, videos, documentaries & multimedia pieces for catalog & upcoming poetry video film festival. Request entry form: Cin(E)-Poetry, 934 Brannan St., 2 fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-9261; fax: 552-9261; poetry@nationalpoetry.org

D.FILM Digital Film Festival [www.dfilm.com] is a traveling showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. D.FILM was official digital film program at 1999 Cannes Film Festival. Look for it in your city & visit web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game.

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; www.libertynet.org/dutv

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2000 SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FILM STUDENTS—CALL FOR ENTRIES Angelus Awards Student Film Festival accepting submissions through July 1. Cash prizes, gifts, Directors Guild screenings. Call (800) 874-9999 or visit: www.angelus.org

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(www.filmfilm.com) seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres Contact: info@filmfilm.com

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return); (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

FOOTAGE WANTED: Tigress Productions seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, experimental & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, is looking for independent docs & dramas 6 to 30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218.

MAKOR continues its on-going series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. MAKOR's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 601-1021 or ken.sherman@makor.org

NETBROADCASTER.COM seeks films & videos for streaming on the net. Expose your feature or short to int'l audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, comedy, animation, docs, experimental, music videos, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all! Netbroadcaster.com launched last fall. Site hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of largest ISPs on the net: films@alchemy.net

NEW VENUE [www.newvenue.com] showcases movies made specifically for Internet & offers filmmakers a guide to optimizing video for web. Submit a digital flick for Y2K season now: QuickTime or Flash, 5 MB or less (15 min. or less for streaming).

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland, OR & a project of Rodeo Film Company, Peripheral Produce seeks to promote experimental, abstract, & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co. Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

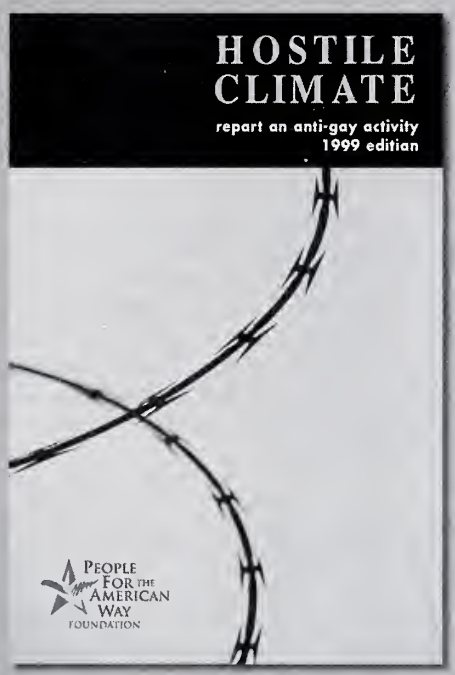
PIONEERING INTERNET NETWORK w/ 24-hr on-demand access seeks art history related film/videos (English only) of all lengths for non-exclusive Internet-only broadcast rights. Content will be broadcast in high speed streaming audio/video format on its new art history channel. No pay, just satisfaction & prestige of having your work seen around the world. Preferred AVI or quick time file on CD, DVD, or Jaz. Will also accept VHS, Beta, DV, DVcam (NTSC preferred).

PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET TV wants your home TV shows & movies. 5-30+ min. If you have one show great; if you can do it weekly, even better! we are aiming for more of an adult viewing crowd...Basically anything goes as long as it's legal! Open your mind & see what falls out. Also Flash animations/movies/cartoons/3D rendered short films. pbtv2@ yahoo.com; http://members.xoom.com/pbtv2/

SHORT CIRCUIT is a monthly showcase of short films & videos produced by Films Arts Foundation. The series screens monthly at the Minna St. Gallery. No submissions

TEMPERATURE READING

People for the American Way's recent publication *Hostile Climate: Report on Anti-Gay Activity* is a timely barometer of the state of censorship, violence, legislation, and activism in the gay community here. Of interest specifically to the filmmaking community are essays by activist filmmakers such as Arthur Dong (*Licensed to Kill*) and Debra Chasnoff (*It's Elementary*), both of whom had to wage battles against anti-gay groups to get their films to air on public television. The "Incidents" section of the book features short write-ups covering a wide-spectrum of activism, both local and national, in many categories including government, religion, employment & censorship. Contact: www.HostileClimate.org



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deadline. Considering works on all subjects & in all genres. Films & videos (16mm & 3/4", previews on VHS) must be under 45 min. to be considered. Short Circuit pays $2/min. & covers all shipping costs. Preview tapes can't be returned. Contact: fax: (415) 552-0882; festival@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

SHORT TV is the only cable network entirely dedicated to Short Films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. To submit your film visit www.shorttv.com; for more info, call: (212) 226-6258.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. Bldg. 9B Rm. 406, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054. dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short animation, experimental or doc videos for on-going screening series. We do not accept narrative or works made on film. We are currently searching for int'l videos for an upcoming series in the spring, please contact us for further info. Send non-returnable VHS tape w/ brief bio & $1 to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, New York, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hr weekly show w/ videos followed by info on makers. Send VHS/S-VHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

ZDTV-2ND ANNUAL CAM FILM FESTIVAL: This unique film festival allows people to submit their own short homemade digital movies using personal equipment such as video cameras or small digital web cameras known as netcams. Anyone can participate & may submit their work at www.zdtv.com/camfest. Cats: humor, special effects, fiction, doc, ZDTV network promotions & a college cinema cat. Deadline: March 31.

ZOOM: During the 70s, ZOOM was a kids'-only series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, films, games & more. ZOOM is back & seeking films, animations & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & you may see your film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, S-8, 16mm, Beta. Age: 7-16. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-3883; marcy_gardner@wgbh.org

Publications

1998 LIBRARY OF AFRICAN CINEMA: resource guide released by California Newsreel. Includes 40 African produced feature films, docs & TV productions. 48-page guide avail. at no charge from: California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax: 621-6522; newsreel@ix.netcom.com; www.newsreel.org

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & U.S. Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, LAVA, 124 Washington Pl., New York, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: Watson-Guptill Guide to workshops, conferences, artists' colonies & academic programs by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities–more than 150 of them–for a wide variety of filmmakers . . . from feature to doc to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

THE SQUEALER, quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel puts upstate NY spin on media-related subjects. Once a year, The Squealer publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed info on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions $15/ year. Contact: Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; www.freenet.buffalo.edu/sigs/links/squeaky/org.htm

Resources & Funds

8x10GLOSSY.COM: Free Internet listing & email address for all actors technicians & organizations. On-line artists' co-op offers free listing in their Directory & Searchable Database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of Bulletin Board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690.

AIVF ON-LINE
Find back issues of *The Independent*, advocacy reports & updates on AIVF events, along with bulletin boards, AIVF member salons, and databases. Check it out:
WWW.AIVF.ORG

CA CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & to pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps., travel & similar activities necessary to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ CA Council for the Humanities staff. Deadlines: Feb. 1 & Aug. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste. 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA (213) 623-5993; in San Diego (619) 232-4020; www.calhum.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov.

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwriting software in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ super 8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio incl. Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, New York, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

EASTMAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Colleges & Univs. in U.S. & Canada which offer a BA/BS/BFA, MA/MA/MFA in film or film production may nominate two students for $5,000 scholarships. Deadline: June 15. For nomination form, write to Betsy A. McLane, Int'l Doc. Association, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER Finishing Funds 2000 deadline March 15 as well as other grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max. amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrolment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Program Dir., Experimental TV Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants up to $50,000 for production/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, combine artistry & intellectual clarity, can be completed within one year of award & have broadcast potential. Deadline: April 4. Contact: Nat'l Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500 x. 205.

IDA/DAVID L. WOLPER STUDENT DOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD is a $1,000 honorarium presented annually to recognize exceptional achievement in nonfiction film & video at university level. Films & videos must be produced by registered students & completed between 1/1/99 & 4/30/00. Winner is honored at 15th Annual IDA Awards Gala on Oct. 29, has film screened at Docufest on Oct. 30 & receives $1,000 certificate from Eastman Kodak for film stock. Deadline: June 15. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, L.A., CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on on-going basis. No finished works. New initiative, DV'99, announced, where ITVS seeks 30 & 60 min. digital video projects shot w/ budgets of up to $125,000. New productions or works-in-progress okay. Deadline: Oct. 15, 2000. For all queries, contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-page letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation, or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

MEDIA ALLIANCE INDEPENDENT RADIO/SOUND ART FELLOWSHIP provides production support for individual artists working in the independent radio or sound art discipline. Three fellowships of $5,000 each will be awarded. Applicants must be working/living within the five boroughs of New York City. Grant made possible by Jerome Foundation. Applics avail. March. Deadline: May 15 (postmarked). Contact: Rachel Melman at Media Alliance (212) 560-2919. Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 450 West 33rd St, NY, NY 10001; www.mediaalliance.org; audiogrant@hotmail.com

NAATA provides funding for independent productions of new Asian American programs for public television. NAATA will give awards ranging from $20,000 to $50,000 for production only. Deadline is June 2 (receipt not postmark). NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St. 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; mediafund@naatanet.org

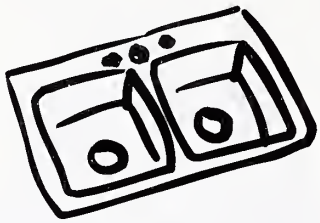
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NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distrib. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ a searchable Industry Directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 unique visitors each month. All articles & listings on the sites are free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEXT WAVE FILMS: funded by the Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus is on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

NYS COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Individual Artists Program announces the availability of production funds for video, radio, audio, installation work & computer-based art. Maximum award is $25,000. Artist must also be sponsored by a nonprofit organization.Deadline: March 1. For application, contact Don Palmer: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7063; dpalmer@nysca.org

OCTOBER EVENT GRANTS: NY Council for the Humanities celebrates State Humanities Month (Oct. '00) a celebration of history, culture & human imagination w/ awards for local programming which reflect diversity of humanities institutions & subjects. Deadline: May 1. Contact: NYCH, 150 Broadway, Ste. 1700, NY, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131; fax: 233-4607; hum@echonyc.com; www.culturefront.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No applic. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS Media Fund provides the impetus for increasing awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity of Pacific Islanders. For the purpose of this open call, PIC defines Pacific Islanders as descendants of the first peoples of Hawai'i, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa and other indigenous Pacific Islanders. PIC funds will provide media makers the opportunity to create television programs that bring a new perspective, quality and quantity of Pacific Islander programs to national public television audiences. Deadline: late May. For guidelines and application contact: Ann Moriyasu, Programming Director, PIC, 1221 Kapi'olani Blvd., Suite 6A-4, Honolulu, HI, 96814; (808) 591-0059; piccom@aloha.net; moriyasu@aloha.net; www.piccom.org

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadlines: May 15 & Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; www.pacificpioneerfund.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE w/ 55¢ stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues w/ goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of prod.; film & video projects in preproduction or distribution stages only. Grants range from $3,000-$8,000. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Viviana Bianchi, Program Officer, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, NY, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories' initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), and projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info.: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants' fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; www.iinfo@arts.state.il.us

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postproduction services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNTIES PROGRAM, National Telecommunications & Information Administration. TOP promotes the development. widespread avail., & use of advanced telecommunications & information technologies to serve public interest. Fiscal 2000 appl. kits are now avail. Deadline March 16. TOP, NTIA, US Dep. of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Ave., NW, HCHB, Rm. 4092, Washington, DC 20230; (202) 482-2048; top@ntia.doc.gov; www.ntia.doc.gov/

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation & Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. APRIL 1 FOR JUNE ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $65 FOR NONMEMBERS; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $90 FOR NONMEMBERS. INCLUDE VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCLUDE: CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD NUMBER; NAME ON CARD; EXPIRATION DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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CHOICES, distributor of World Almanac Video and Choices Video, is looking for completed quality documentaries and films for distribution. Contact: Choices, Inc., 369 S. Doheny Drive, PMB 1105, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (310) 358-0885.

HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA, a leader in distributing educational materials for over 25 years, is now looking for new video & film productions to be included exclusively in its 2000 catalog. HRM is specifically acquiring programs that deal w/ teen drug abuse, sexuality, relationships, smoking & violence. All content should be appropriate for classroom use. Please submit your production on VHS w/ a letter describing any prior distribution, reviews & awards. Only videotapes w/ SASEs will be returned. Send to: Human Relations Media, Attn: Creative Director, 41 Kensico Dr., Mt. Kisco, NY 10549. Visit us online at www.hrmvideo.com

INTERNET DISTRIBUTOR seeks quality independent films for home video and other sales. We offer producers a significant piece of the gross, based on rights package. Check our web site for details and submission info: www.indie-underground.com

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THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distrib, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Ste. 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com. Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

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ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com

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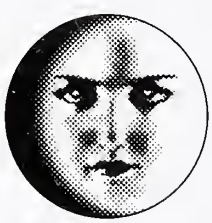
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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other maga-

zines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

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MEDIA STUDIES PROGRAM at Univ. of San Francisco invites applics for Media Artist-in-Residence. Renewable Term Faculty Position (non tenure-track) to be appointed initially for 1 yr. Successful applicant will be appointed at the Asst. or Assoc. Professor level, beginning Fall. Creative expertise may be in audio, video, or multi-media. Teaching responsibilities incl. 2 classes per semester. Classes may be offered in core Media Studies Curriculum (e.g. Video or Audio Production, Media & New Tech., Race & Ethnicity in Media) or special topics classes offered from the candidate's area of expertise. Position also involves supervising & working w/ students on significant media creative projects each semester. Appls. should incl. short proposal for project(s) for 1st year. Qualifications: Univ. or college teaching experience, evidence of significant creative work, willingness to work in a culturally diverse environment & an understanding of & commitment to support the mission of the Univ. Submit a letter of appl., resumé, evidence of recent creative work (e.g. VHS/CD/audio tape), statement of teaching philosophy, evidence of teaching ability incl. copies of teaching evaluations if avail. & 3 letters of recomm. to: Bernadette Barker-Plummer Chair, Media Studies Dept., Univ. of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94117. Applics must be received by April 15 to ensure full consideration. Minority & women applicants particularly encouraged. AA/EOE.

NY BASED Suitcase Productions seeking experienced Avid editors and assistant editors for factual programs, magazine series and travel programs. Send reels and resumés to 307 7th Ave., Ste. 1607, NY, NY 10001, Attn: David.

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About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film and video makers. AIVF is supported by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, artist profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities, programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by The Independent.

We also publish a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check The Independent or visit the salon section of the AIVF website. If you're interested in starting a salon in your area, ask for our startup kit!

ADVOCACY

Over the past 25 years AIVF has been outspoken in our efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our community. Recent activities have included a successful campaign to restore the short documentary Oscar category, and to keep DBS providers accountable to the public. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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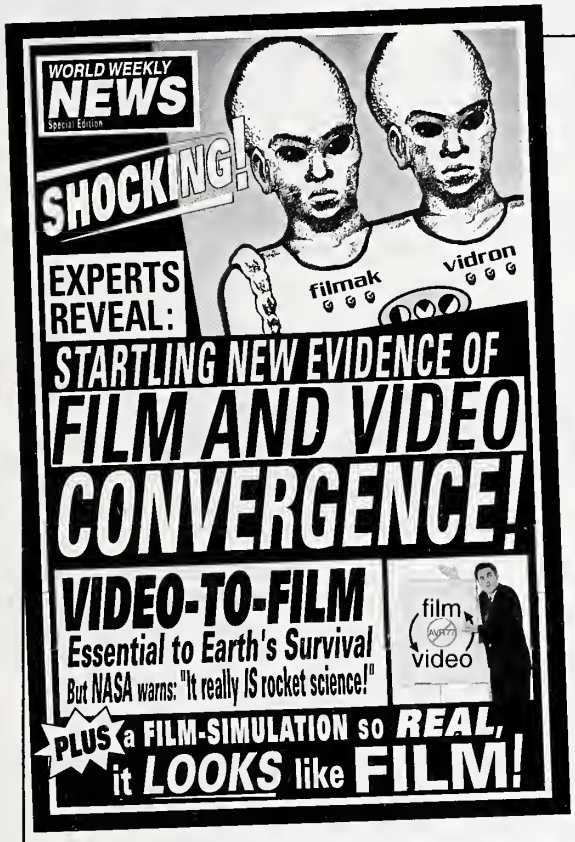
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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, AmEx, or Mastercard or mail a check or money order. (Your check must be received one week prior to event to reserve your seat.) Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis. Waiting lists are taken for all programs.

Due to space limitations, we will hold all reserved seats until 5 minutes before the event, upon which unclaimed seats will be given to walk-ins.

The following details were being confirmed at presstime. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x.301 for the latest information.

March Events

AFTER HOURS
EXTENDED LIBRARY HOURS

When: Every 1st Wed., 6-9 p.m. (March 1)
Where: Filmmakers Resource Library, at AIVF
Cost: free to members & nonmembers.
No RSVP required.

AIVF offers extended Resource Library Hours once a month for members as well as the general public. The Filmmakers Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories (*The Hollywood Creative Directory*, *The CPB Directory*, *The Blu-Book*, *NYPG*) to film history and biographies, along with back issues of trade magazines (*Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter*) and film publications (*Res*, *Filmmaker*, *MovieMaker*, along with 20 years of *The Independent*). After Hours is also the perfect time to pick up the latest version of the AIVF Member Benefits list, or ask questions about all membership gets you.

AIVF AT THE NYUFF
TWO PANELS CO-SPONSORED BY INSOUND

When: Sat. **March 12** & Sun. **March 13**
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 Second Ave., NYC), Maya Daren Theater
Cost: free to all. No reservations necessary, but space is limited so get there early!



Mr. Link says: "Don't Miss the 7th Annual New York Underground Film Festival!"

For the second year in a row—because once is never enough—AIVF collaborates with the New York Underground Film Festival in a presentation of panel discussions.

Thanks for the Music: Navigating Music Rights (Saturday, March 12)

Internet Distribution: What the Fuck's Up with This Online Shit? (Sunday, March 13)

Details pending at presstime. Check out our website for more information including the who's who of participating panelists.

MEET & GREET
PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA

When: Tues., **March 29**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free to members/$10 general public
RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x. 301

The Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media supports the production of independent social-issue film and video and remains the only ongoing source of funding committed exclusively to this kind of media. The primary purpose of the Robeson Fund is to support independent media productions that are not only compelling politically and artistically, but which will also be used as tools for progressive social change activism and organizing.

Media artists who are women, gay men, and lesbians, disabled or from communities of color or who have little recourse to other funding sources due to the controversial nature of their projects are particularly encouraged to apply. Find out more about the Robeson Fund and its umbrella foundation, The Funding Exchange, from Program Officer Viviana Bianchi. See Funder FAQ on p. 40 for more details.

TECHSPEAK
DEMO: FINAL CUT PRO

When: Tues., **March 21**, 6:30 & 8 p.m.
(Each session is 1 hour in length & limited to eight people.)
Where: Outpost Digital (145 6th Ave at Spring St., penthouse suite, NYC)
Cost: $10 (members only)
RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 (RSVP early—space is extremely limited!)



Back by popular demand, Evan Schectman will offer another demo of Final Cut Pro editing software at his postproduction studio. Find out why Final Cut Pro is becoming the choice of many in the world of desktop editing. This demo can be the "prequel" to Outpost's Final Cut Pro training seminar offered to members at a 10% discount. Come check it out!

DOCUMENTARY DIALOGUES
FICTIVE NONFICTIONS

When: Wed. **March 15**, 6:30-8 p.m.;
Wine & Goldfish reception follows.
Cost: Free (members only)
RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x. 301

Documentary Dialogues is a bi-monthly discussion group where AIVF nonfiction filmmakers tackle theoretical and philosophical issues of independent film- and videomaking, including often neglected issues of content and ethics. It's also a great way to meet your working peers!

Our March program will examine meanings encoded in fictional work through the appropriation of documentary forms. Discussion will center on the hows and whys of taking such an approach for works ranging from docudrama to political parody, as well as the impact such work has on an audience's faith in and respect for the veracity of non-fiction work. Small group discussion will be followed by an informal wine and goldfish gathering. Space is limited, so RSVP early!

AIVF CO-SPONSORS

Select Screenings at the Walter Reade Theatre, Presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. The Walter Reade Theatre is located at Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th Street at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

March 3-8: "***Film Comment*'s Most Important Films/Makers of the Nineties**" includes NY premieres of new works by Von Trier, Kiarostami, and de Oliveira. AIVF members may attend for $5.50. Show card at box office.

Coming in April

AIVF CO-SPONSORS:

PS2000

PS ShortFilm Exhibition

PS2000 brings shorts back to the big screen in style! Run by a collective of artists and executives from the worlds of film, video, art & design united on a mission to bring wider exposure to the world of shorts, PS (or Phat Shorts) 2000 presents four consecutive Mondays of innovative work emphasizing craftsmanship and community over competition. The fifth edition of this New York-based festival continues that mission, as it brings a balance of festival favorites, diamond-in-the-rough discoveries, and tragically neglected oddities. For those New York-bound during the month of April, participation in this electric communion with the hottest little movies in town is highly recommended!

AIVF will present panel discussions during the festival. (Details posted at our website and Events Hotline.) For more info: www.ps00.com

MAESTRO TOUR PILOT PROJECT

BUFFALO, NEW YORK
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Over the next few months, AIVF and NAMAC (the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers) will implement a collaborative project we've dubbed the Media Arts Environmental Scanning Tour of Regional Organizations, or MAESTRO. MAESTRO provides a vehicle for our national organizations to stimulate and celebrate regional media arts communities, while collecting data that will allow us to better address our services to the field.

The MAESTRO program is a cluster of activities during which representatives of AIVF,

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NAMAC, and local organizations—along with working artists and the general public—will participate in formal focus groups, informal dialogues, screenings, open studios, and technical workshops for both artists and organizations. As we go to press, MAESTRO is locking dates during April and May in New Orleans, Buffalo, and Los Angeles: three cities selected for our pilot project because each has a strong media arts culture, yet faces a different set of systemic issues.

It is our hope that the program will strengthen regional media arts communities through fostering new relationships within the community, drawing attention to the achievements of local artists, and providing training.

For more information on the tour, visit www.aivf.org or contact maestro@aivf.org or (212) 807-1400 x. 232.

AIVF/FIVF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT

For 25 years, AIVF and sister organization the Foundation for Independent Film have worked to support independent artists and advocate for the media arts field. Our achievements have preserved opportunities for producers working outside the mainstream, while our publications and programs provide essential resources for artists. As a mature organization, we provide a place where a body of artists characterized by activism and professionalism intermingles with an evolving generation characterized by entrepreneurialship and experimentation. And we remain the only national resource dedicated to advocating the vital role of independent media artists in promoting diversity of vision in artistic, cultural, and social consciousness in larger society.

We have seen vast changes over the past quarter century, many of which have been charted in the pages of this publication. As AIVF enters the new millennium, it is clear that we must retool our organization to ensure that we remain vital and relevant within a new media arts landscape. To this end, AIVF is undertaking a comprehensive planning project, generously supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

The first stage of this three-year project is a comprehensive survey of the status and issues of contemporary media artists. We will implement this "independent census" through four avenues:

- continued surveys of our membership
- a survey of *The Independent* readership
- focus groups to be held in various communities across the country
- collecting more in-depth profiles of a sample of our constituency

In April, the AIVF Board of Directors will hold a retreat (underwritten by the LEF Foundation) dedicated to outlining the goals and tasks of this project.

AIVF board and staff members are excited about this opportunity to reshape our organization, and proud of the endorsement provided by the MacArthur and LEF Foundations. Watch this space and our web site for evolving information; if you would like to provide input, email elizabeth@aivf.org.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

AIVF is marking the occasion of our 25th Anniversary with the establishment of the **AIVF Hall of Valor**: a recognition of 25 people, places, or things that have made their mark on the independent media field through exemplary long-term contributions, groundbreaking work, or service to the community.

A "career tribute" of sorts, the Hall of Valor is a place to not only recognize important figures in our community's history, but to also provide perspective on the past quarter-century of "independence." This is not a "best filmmaker" list. Nominees need not be alive, need not be film- or videomakers, need not even be people: we are hoping to recognize a diverse group whose qualifications include innovation, service to the community, historical importance, and valor.

We invite AIVF members to nominate individuals or institutions for the Hall of Valor. Members may submit as few or as many nominations as they wish.

Nominations may be made either online (www.aivf.org) or by mail (AIVF attn.: VALOR, 304 Hudson St. 6th Fl., New York, NY 10013), and must arrive at AIVF by **Friday, March 31.** Please include your name, membership number, and one sentence highlighting the achievements of each of your nominees.

Nomination submissions will be tallied then presented to an Awards panel made up of AIVF Board of Directors members, who will make the final selections. Honorees will be announced in June, and recognized at AIVF's 25th Anniversary celebration in the fall of 2000.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiatic and committed members to start a salon in their area. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 for application materials.

See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of each month, 7 pm
Where: Yarbrough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

New Brunswick, NJ:
Contact: Allen Chou (212) 904-1133; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668 or dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; www.members.tripod.com/rochaivf/index.html

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811 or espinosa@electriciti.com

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; rmondar1@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

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Save the date:
the Annual AIVF Members Meeting will be held June 16.

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FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, and information services. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Academy Foundation
The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation
Forest Creatures Entertainment, Inc.
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Heathcote Art Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

We also wish to thank the following organizational members:

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Nonprofit Members: AZ: University of Arizona; Women's Studies/Northern Arizona University; **CA**: Filmmakers Alliance; Film Arts Foundation; Film Studies/UC Berkeley; IFP/West; ITVS; Jewish Film Festival; KOCT; Media Fund California; UC/Media Resource Center; NAATA; NAMAC; Nat'l Educational Media Network; USC School of Cinema TV; University of California; **CO**: Center for the Arts; Denver Center for the Performing Arts; **CT**: Film Fest New Haven; **GA**: Image Film Video Center; **HI**: Aha Punana Leo; University of Hawaii **IL**: Art Institute of Chicago; Chicago Underground Film Festival; Columbia College; Community Television Network; Facets; MacArthur Foundation; Women In The Director's Chair; **KY**: Appalshop; **MA**: CCTV; Long Bow Group Inc; LTC Communications; Somerville Community TV; **MD**: Laurel Cable Network; **MI**: Ann Arbor Film Festival; **MN**: Bush Artist Fellowships; IFP/North; Intermedia Arts; Walker Arts Center; **MO**: Webster University Film Series; **MS**: 2nd Annual Magnolia Indie Festival; **NC**: Cucalorus Film Foundation; Doubletake Documentary Film Fest; **NE**: Nebraska Independent Film Project, Inc.; **NY**: AARP New York State; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts, Inc.; Audrey Cohen College; Center for New American Media; Cinema Arts Centre; Communications Society; Cornell Cinema; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Dyke TV Productions; Educational Video Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Film and Video Cener; Globalvision, Inc.; Guggenheim Museum SoHo; Irish American Film Foundation; John Jay High School; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; MOMA-Film; Museum of the American Indian; National Video Resources; New York Women In Film and Television; Open Society Institute/Soros Documentary Fund; Paper Tiger TV; Paul Robeson Fund/Funding Exchange; The Ross School Library; The Roth School Library; The Standby Program; Stony Brook Film Festival; Squeaky Wheel; SUNY/Buffalo Dept. Media Studies; SUNY Buffalo; SUNY College/Fredona; Third World Newsreel; Upstate Films, Ltd.; Women Make Movies; **OH**: Athens Center For Film & Video; City of Cleveland; Media Bridges Cincinnati; Ohio Independent Film Festival; Ohio University-Film; Wexner Center; **OR**: Communication Arts, MHCC; Northwest Film Center; **PA**: Carnegie Museum of Art; PA/Council On The Arts; Philadelphia Film/Video Association; Scribe Video Center; Univ. of the Arts; Temple Univ./Dept. of Media; **RI**: Flickers Arts Collaborative; RI School of Design/Film, Animation Dept; **SC**: South Carolina Arts Commission; **TN**: Nashville Independent Film Fest; **TX**: Austin Film Society; Austin Film Festival; Detour Film Foundation; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Southwest Alternate Media Project; Texas Film Commmission; U. of Texas Dept. Radio-TV-Film; Worldfest Houston; **WA**: 911 Media Arts. Center; Seattle Central Community College; **WI**: Madison Film Forum; **India**: Foundation for Universal Responsiblity; **Mexico**: Centro De Capacitacion Cinematografica

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $100,000.

Millennium Campaign Fund

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

Corporate/Government/ Foundation Contributors

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We also wish to thank the individuals and organizations who have recently made or renewed generous donations of $100 or more as **MCF Friends** (11/15/99 to 1/15/00):

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Why did prominent film producer **Dale Pollock** leave 24 active projects in Hollywood to become Dean of the School of Filmmaking at the North Carolina School of the Arts? "Because I think we have the potential to be the best film school in the world," he says. With 12 feature films to his credit – including SET IT OFF, BLAZE, A MIDNIGHT CLEAR, and MRS. WINTERBOURNE – and a best-selling biography of George Lucas, Pollock ought to know.

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This column commemorates the 25th anniversity of AIVF. Every month on this page, we'll revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the March issues of The Independent *from its launch to the present.*

"It was our intent and full expectation that CPB would set aside 50% of its programming funds for products developed by independent producers."

Henry Waxman, Member of Congress, 1979

"Back in 1969, just when portable video equipment was becoming available in stores, I met some people called the Videofreex. It was terrific. We set up a loft in SoHo in the late sixties and early seventies as a video studio and did everything we could think of on tape. We never stopped to think about why we were doing it or whether there was any money in it. That was back in '69. Of course, some people have made millions thinking about whether there was money in it in the years since then."

Skip Blumberg, 1981

"Although in this age of Atari, cranking by motor a perforated strip of film—the gelatinous emulsion extruded from cattle bones, the cellulose base from tree pulp—through a device mechanically resembling a sewing machine and dunking it repeatedly in tanks of chemical soup before drying and buffing might seem by comparison primitive, the end result justifies the means with a standard of image fidelity unmatched by other systems. Simply put: color negative represents a mature, vital, enduring technology, not to be written off."

David Leitner, 1982

"The consumer video market is expanding just as the prognosticators promised. This January was a boom month for video stores, as a crush of customers rushed to the cassette shelves, eager to try the VCRs they got for Christmas."

Debra Goldman, 1985

"The fact is we are interested in television. Either in changing it, adapting it, getting rich off it, co-opting it, incorporating it, selling it, free-basing it or just plain getting our work on it; the name of the game is T-fucking-V."

John Sanborn, 1985

"Films like *Save the Planet, In Our Own Backyards,* and *Peace: A Conscious Choice* were deemed uneducational [by the USIA] because they presented a 'point of view' and were liable to be 'misunderstood by those lacking American points of reference.' Producers have suspected that 'point of view' was a code for a view objectionable to the Reagan administration."

Debra Goldman, 1986

"Electronics engineers are nearing a working principle that reduces all video, graphics, and computing possibilities to a single technology. The principle, of course, is digitization."

David Leitner, 1986

Despite SAG's emphasis on its economic motives, the new contract indicates significant changes for a union that has been considered one of the least flexible with independents."

Lucinda Furlong, 1986



Much news footage has been irretrievably lost. For the first 20 years of television news, none of the networks had film libraries per se, even for internal use. When Emile de Antonio and Daniel Talbot asked CBS in 1961 for footage from the 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings, "They thought we were a little strange," says Talbot. But, he recalls, once the network realized the producers were "not just some middle-aged hippies" and "heard the jingle of money," they sat down to talk.

Patricia Thomson, 1987

Moviegoers can expect to see more *American Playhouse* productions up on the silver screen. The seven-year-old public television series is doubling the number of features it will put into theatrical distribution.

Patricia Thomson, 1989

"The way I see it, when you watch a movie, you either role play or disengage. And most white men don't want to be a black woman for two hours. But they will spend those same two hours being a homey, because it's a male fantasy and they can walk out of the theater without worrying about getting shot."

Julie Dash, 1992

"It's like Nirvana says: 'Corporate rock still sucks.' But if they're going to give you money, you should definitely take it and turn it into something good or subversive . . . There are different ways to bring about change in this society, and they're not always by standing outside and screaming as loud as you can. Sometimes you can get yourself into the boardroom and set it on fire."

Heather Mackey, 1994

"Norman Mailer's proverbial 'shit storm' hit the arts community when the GOP electorally massacred the Democratic party, taking control of Congress for the first time in 40 years. The question posed by supporters of the NEA and public broadcasting was not whether the two institutions would be affected, but just how severely."

Christopher Borrelli, 1995

"The importance of *Primary* still hasn't been understood. The fact that there are no interviews is staggering in a film of that sort. There are no people talking to cameras. It's unbelievable. That still hasn't been understood by the industry or television at all."

Richard Leacock, 1996

"I've always felt very much like Mario Puzo. He said if he had known so many people were going to read *The Godfather*, he would have written it better."

Andrew Sarris, on his auteur theory, 1998

"A lot of filmmakers see themselves as artists and creators, not as business people. That's a nice exalted goal, but to survive in this capitalist society, you have to think otherwise. Especially with film, because it's so expensive."

Arthur Dong, 1999

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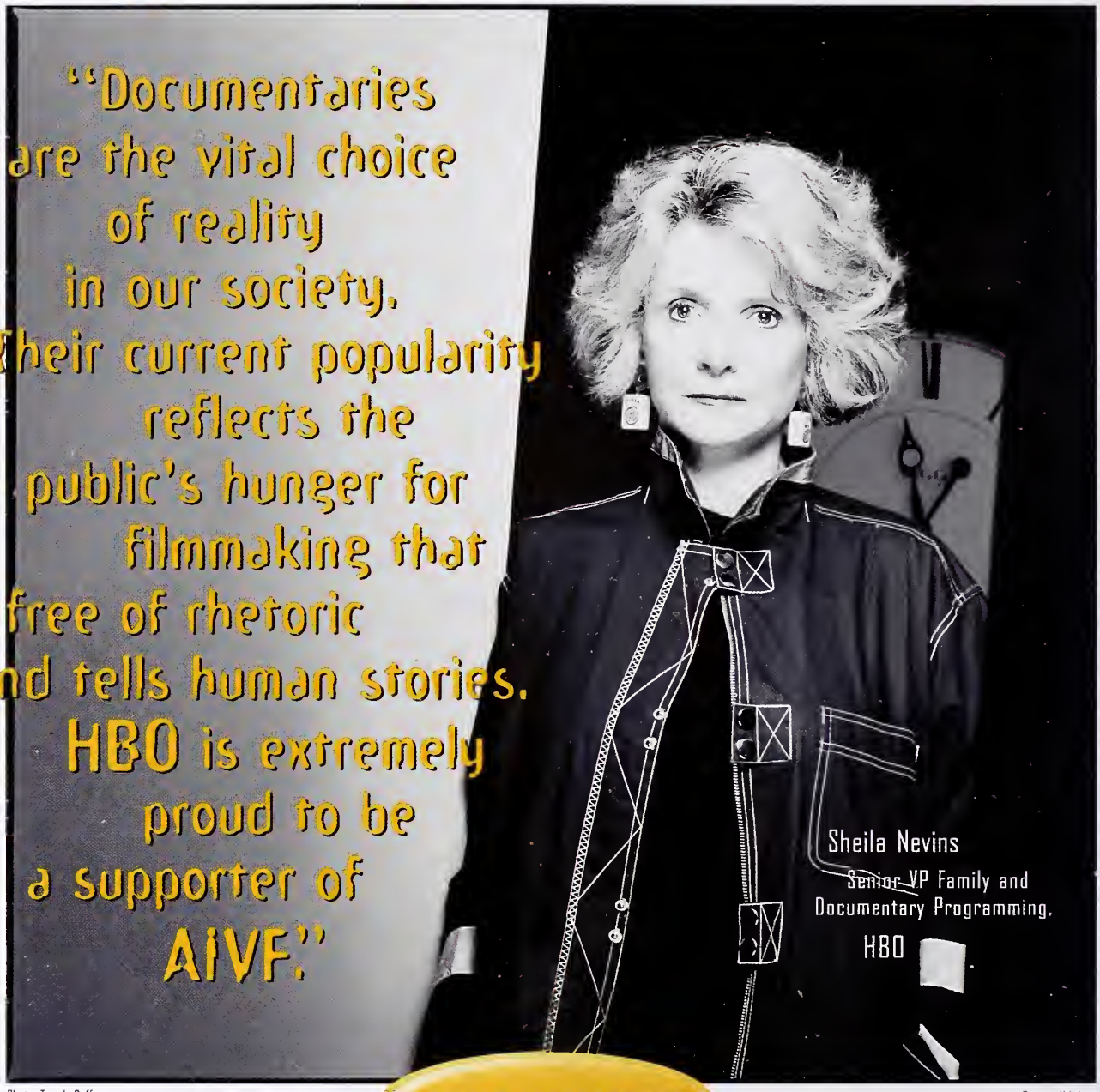


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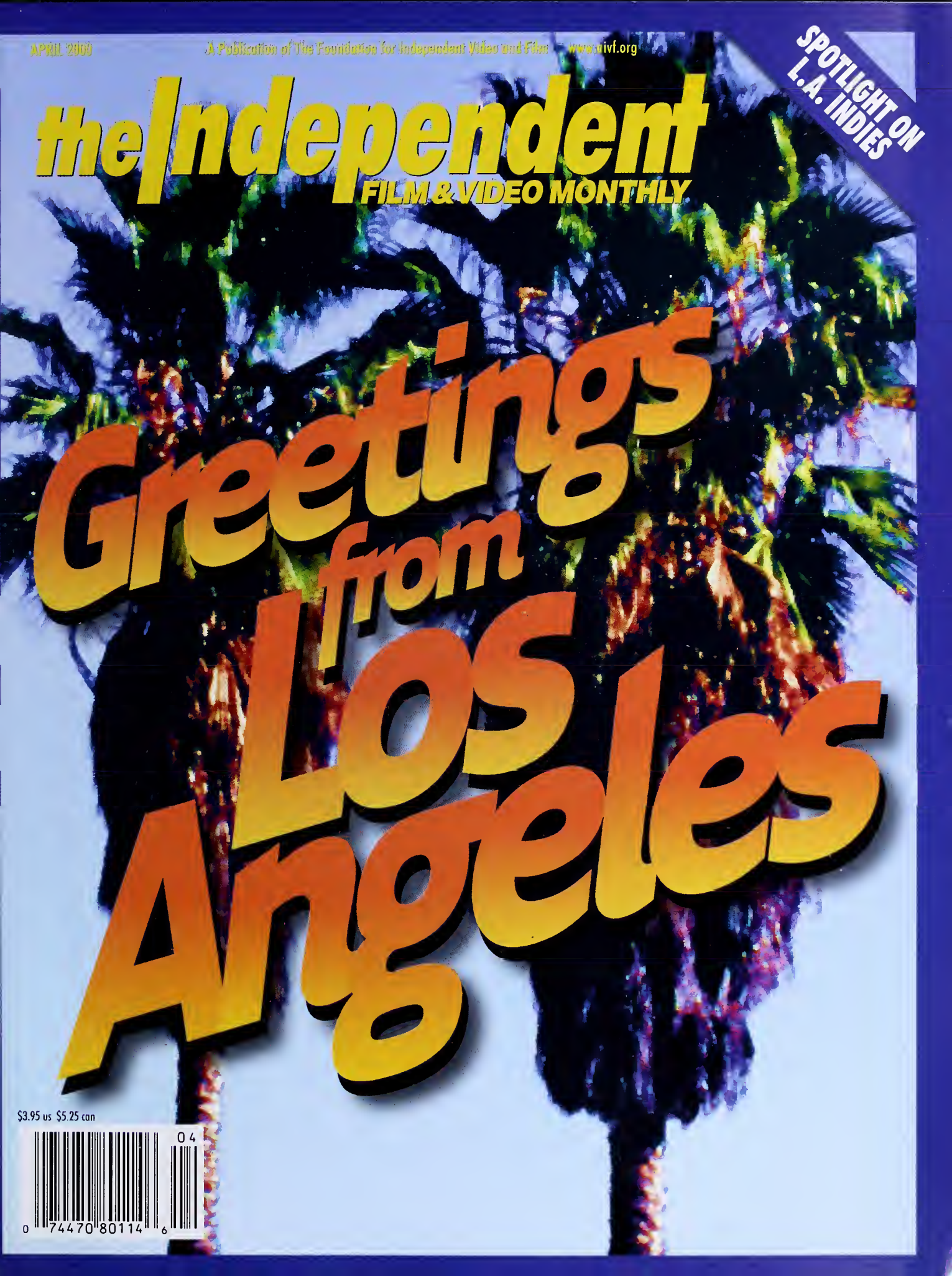
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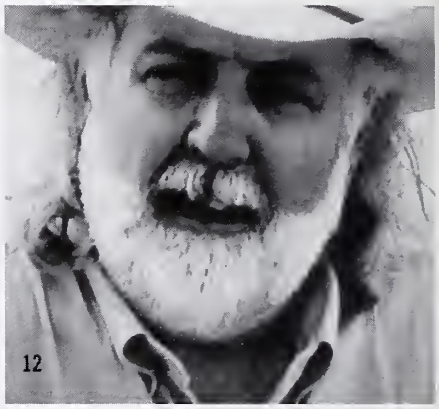
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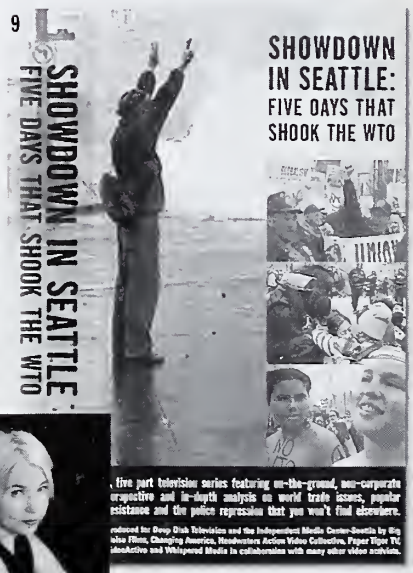
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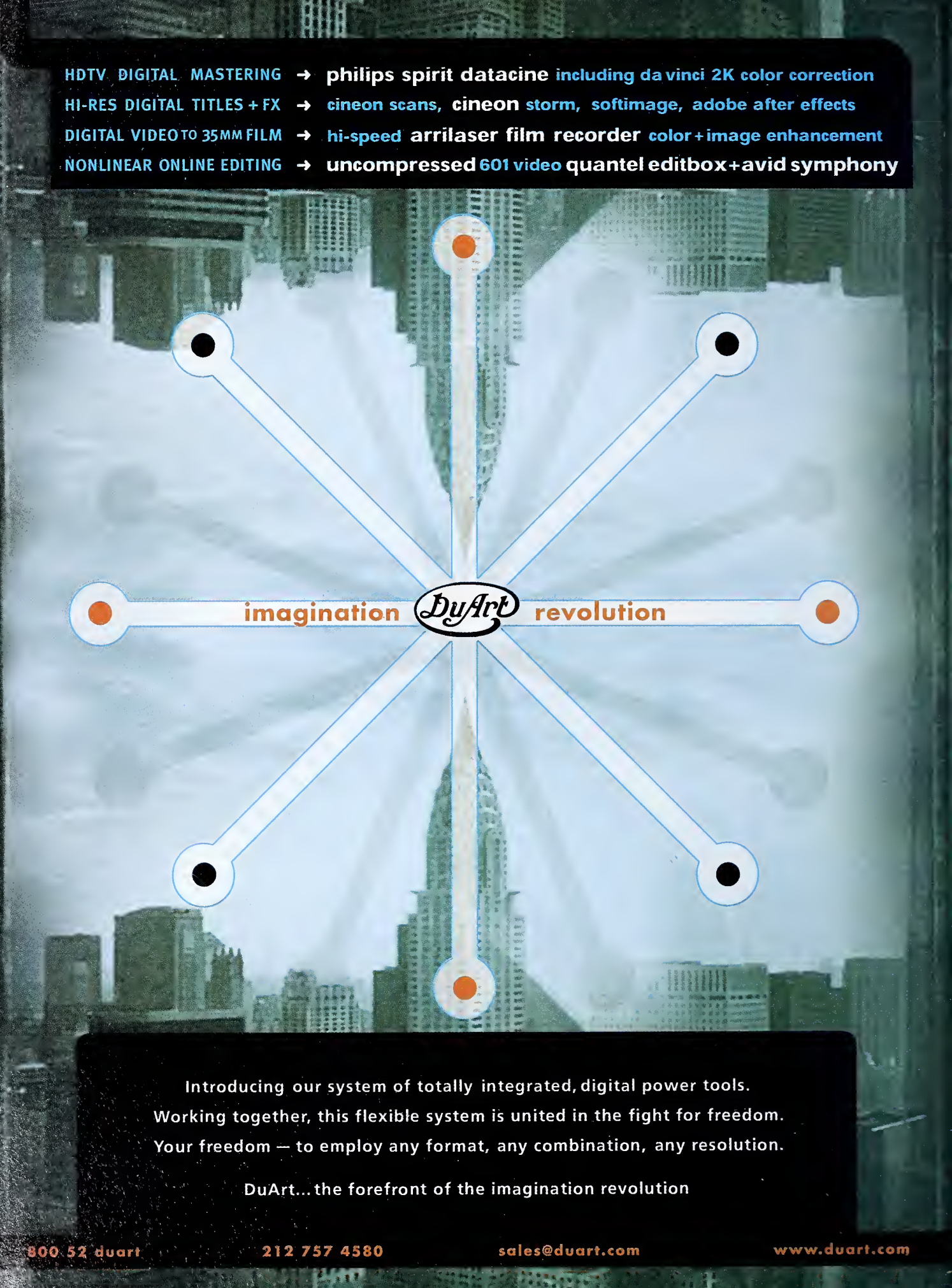
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LETTERS

To the editor:

I am writing with regard to an account of media arts studies at the University of New Mexico ["Land of Enchantment," December 1999]. After remarking that UNM's "film and media arts departments remain under-funded," the article briefly describes an annual two-week course for 10-14 students offered in the Department of Art and Art History and provides little further information about media arts studies at the university.

Although your article indicates that a "media arts center" as well as "film and media arts departments" exist at UNM, there are no entities with these names. There is simply the Media Arts Program. Enrolled each year are more than 1,500 students, a population far larger than any other in New Mexico devoted to the study of film and video as art. The Media Arts Program offers a broad curriculum in history, criticism, theory, and production, and engages in curricular partnerships with numerous disciplines at UNM, ranging from Computer Science to Cultural Studies. The course emphasized in your article is one of many that are cross-listed in the Media Arts Program.

It would take more words than space allows to explain how the Media Arts Program has served at the forefront of film education and culture in New Mexico for almost 30 years. One would discuss the eminent international artists and scholars who have come to UNM as guests of the program's International Cinema Lecture Series and Summer Arts of the Americas Film Festival and Course. One also would discuss students who have gone on to write, direct, produce, and edit successful feature-length films in Hollywood and New York; write articles and books; teach in major universities; and win regional and national recognition for work created in the Media Arts Program. And one would discuss the awards and accomplishments of our small but fine faculty—a Guggenheim Fellowship, NEA awards, books about film and video in relation to new technology, modernity, gender, and the Third World, published by Duke, University of California, State University of New York, and other noteworthy presses.

For more information, your readers may contact us, which the author of your article chose not to do.

Ira Jaffe, Professor and Head, Media Arts Program, University of New Mexico [mediarts@unm.edu]

Devin O'Leary replies:

I am well aware of the Media Arts Program, having graduated from UNM and studied under the apt tutelage of Mr. Jaffe for four years. The article in question was intended as a brief overview of the indie scene in New Mexico, though, not a recruitment brochure for one school. Would that I could have mentioned every single filmmaker and every single filmmaking program in the state. But, as the Mad Hatter said to Alice, "No room! No room!"

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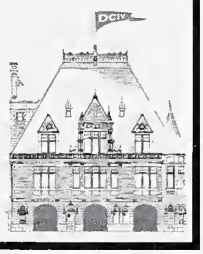
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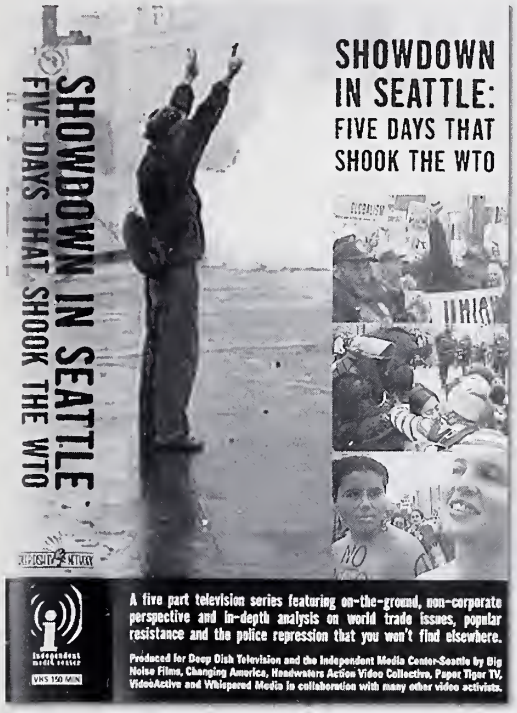
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Media collectives collaborate to create the video Showdown in Seattle *on the WTO protests.*

BY GEOV PARRISH



Showdown in Seattle **was compiled from footage by an in-house team of 30 editors and videographers, plus 100 others who captured a city under seige.**

FOR LEFTIST ACTIVISM, THE WORLD TRADE Organization protests in Seattle from November 30 to December 3 were a watershed event. A new generation was galvanized in the heat of Seattle's tear gas and rubber bullets. But in the chronicling of that story, another watershed was taking place among the activist media gathered alongside the protesters in the streets.

Three separate alternative media centers operated in Seattle during the protests, providing streaming and live feeds to media outlets around the world. Perhaps the most ambitious grassroots project came through the Independent Media Center (IMC), a hastily assembled alliance of print, video, and audio activists. The IMC's video feeds—30-minute satellite uplinks fed each morning after all-night editing sessions—have resulted in a 150 minute compilation video and a 60-minute edited version called *Showdown in Seattle: Five Days that Shook the WTO*.

"It was magic," says Thomas Poole of Deep Dish TV, whose assessment is echoed by numerous other activists who helped *Showdown in Seattle* come together. "It went so smoothly; it was real pleasurable," adds Michael Eisenmenger of Paper Tiger TV. For each night's segment, several different media collectives contributed pieces; collaborators included Paper Tiger TV, Changing America, Big Noise Films, Headwaters Action Video Coalition, Whispered Media, Amazon Watch, and Videoactive. Over 100 accredited videographers came in from the streets of Seattle with footage. Free Speech TV helped with the web streaming, Deep Dish did outreach and raised funds, and the IMC created and provided infrastructure. And it all came together on six weeks' notice with virtually no funding.

The net result is choppy in places, hard to follow in others (there's no narrative throughline). But the often-gripping footage of police excesses breaks through the mainstream media narrative of what actually happened. What's more, protesters and anti-WTO activists are allowed to speak for themselves, explaining why the WTO was a compelling issue that brought so many disparate constituencies together.

The 30-minute feeds represented one aspect of a multi-faceted strategy to get the word out. By Monday of WTO week, Free Speech TV's Eric Galatas says the web site was getting over 1 million hits daily: "The server looked like a time bomb." With viewers in every time zone following along, IMC volunteers were providing a constant stream of footage.

Meanwhile, that footage was being edited on-site. Seattleite Jill Freidberg, who in one 16-hour marathon session created the final 60-minute tape, recalls, "There were probably 35 individuals, videographers not included, who every night between 9 p.m. and 11 a.m. were editing parts of the same video, with no clashes and no ego. It was incredibly smooth and congenial, true collaboration." At five minutes to 11 each morning, couriers would rush in with the day's segment to be fed to satellite; at the same time, the next day's footage was already coming in.

In addition to international broadcast on public television and public access stations, the Seattle crews have other ambitious plans for distribution. The 60-minute tape has been selling so well "we can't make dubs fast enough," says Freidberg. "For those who were there, it's like showing people their home movie." (The participating organizations have already sold over half of the initial run of 2,000 tapes, which are available either by phone or through each of the organizations' websites.) Beyond selling tapes, Freidberg lists plans for "tours, music with bands—not relying on powers that be like PBS [to broadcast it]—taking a 'democracy in the streets' approach, taking video out on the sidewalk."

Like the protests themselves, much of the energy and inspiration for *Showdown in Seattle* came from youth. Paper Tiger's Jessica Glass estimates that most of the video editing was done by people in their 20s to late 30s. Similarly, outfits like Big Noise Films contributed a young, hip-hop style to each day's content. One of the challenges of editing each day's pieces, notes Eisenmenger, was weaving together such disparate styles.

So what's next? Freidberg says Big Noise and the IMC are planning a cohesive, comprehensive 60-minute documentary on that week, due to be ready this spring. And all of the participants echo an eagerness to try this sort of a collaboration again. There is already an Independent Media Center set up in Philadelphia in preparation for the summer's Republican convention and its attendant protests.

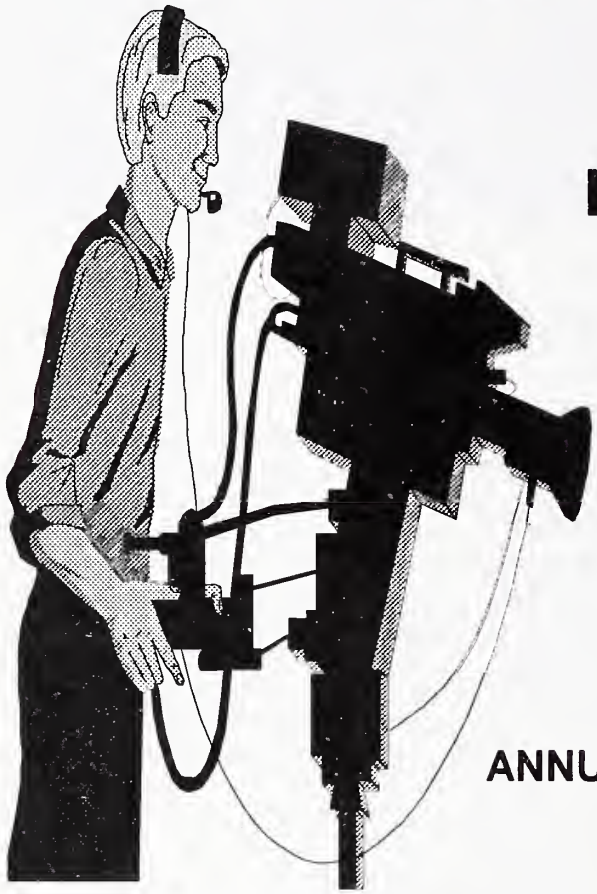
Says Freidberg, it was "the most amazing collaboration I've ever witnessed. It was an experiment. None of us knew how it was going to work." Adds Eisenmenger, speaking both of the video and the protests themselves: "Seattle was a dress rehearsal . . . Seattle was huge; I think we'll be spending the next two years trying to understand it."

For more information, contact Independent Media Center in Seattle, (206) 262-0721.

Geov Parrish [gparrish@seattleweekly.com] is a political columnist for the Seattle Weekly.

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The Show Must Go On!

KQED Launches Independent View.

BY BRENDAN PETERSON

OVER THE LAST DECADE, THE WORDS "INDEPENDENT film" have evolved into a hip and profoundly vague marketing term. As the mainstream embraces this cool label and a handful of high-profile indie directors hog the spotlight, the majority of independent films are hung out to dry by the popular press.



Sylvia Mullally & Michael Fox of *Independent View*, a new indie showcase on San Francisco's KQED-TV.

Independent View wants to change all of that. Created by Peter Calabrese, vice president of TV Productions at San Francisco's PBS affiliate KQED, and developed in conjunction with the show's executive producer, filmmaker Jack Walsh, *Independent View* is a local weekly half-hour show on Friday nights dedicated to taking viewers behind the scenes and into the minds of independent films and filmmakers. Award-winning filmmaker Jennifer Maytorena Taylor (*Paulina*), who was hired to produce the show, explains its innovative vision: "We see ourselves as advocates for independent filmmakers. By covering the broad spectrum of independent film work out there, we hope to encourage viewers of all types to see films they may not have considered."

The show's hosts—Michael Fox, a Bay Area film critic and journalist, and Sylvia Mullally, an actress and radio personality—weave an easygoing mixture of filmmaker interviews, film previews, and festival coverage into an informative, engaging television experience.

Independent View, which premiered last November, has been budgeted to run for a year. For Bay Area residents, this is major news since the normally buttoned-down PBS affiliate rarely produces more than an occasional cooking show. Last year, in support of *Independent View*, KQED publicly announced a new commitment to the thriving Bay Area film community: the "Independent Initiative," [www.kqed.org/inview] which includes support for local filmmakers through donations of facilities and equipment, assistance with distribution, and increased on-air exposure for new work in film and video.

Despite this feel-good indie spirit, executives at KQED are aware that without strong word-of-mouth viewer support, *Independent View* could become a good idea that eventually goes away. To this end, the show's producers recently revamped the program's format, moving co-host Mullally into the role of correspondent—with roving reporters B. Ruby Rich and Wesley Morris—and handing Fox the primary hosting duties. As with any unique and innovative experiment, growing pains are inevitable and subtle changes will likely continue until the show hits a groove.

Eventually Fox imagines that national and international filmmakers, writers, producers, and actors, fed up with the sound-bite coverage afforded most indie releases, will flock to *Independent View* as a haven for intelligent discussions of their work.

So far, the show has attracted an eclectic crew of filmmaker guests, including local son Craig Baldwin (*Spectres of the Spectrum*), Patricia Rozema (*Mansfield Park*), Danielle Renfew and Greg Harrison (*Groove*), and Mike Leigh (*Topsy Turvy*). Roving reporter Mullally went head to head with documentary guru Errol Morris about his latest film, *Mr. Death.* Producer Taylor emphasizes that the goal of *Independent View* is to mix high profile national names like Morris with lesser known, local talent.

So far, Bay Area buzz for the show been strong, as filmmakers see *Independent View* as a new and highly visible vehicle to promote their latest work. In fact, much of the show's eclectic energy stems from the unbridled enthusiasm of the unrehearsed, mostly rookie filmmakers who appear as guests. Unlike the polished facade of *Entertainment Tonight* interviewees, the guests on *Independent View* tend to be honest and sincere, a refreshing change from the superficial fluff and monotony of standard press junkets.

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However, for the show's hosts, interviewing these fresh-faced filmmakers presents a special challenge.

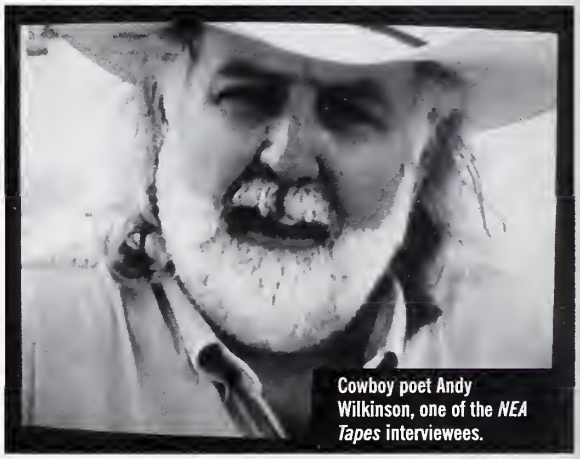
"A local filmmaker who is new to interviews and hasn't spent hours thinking up answers might not be as comfortable in front of the camera as more seasoned filmmakers," notes Fox. Although he has honed television skills since the show's premiere, his journalism background and strong connection to the Bay Area film community make him a crucial cog for the film-smart format. "Sometimes these folks aren't as concise and articulate with their answers," he continues, "so basically, to keep the show moving, I've had to learn to interrupt people."

And while it's true that independent film is hotter than ever, a program like *Independent View* is a true test of the public's desire to delve beyond the sexy facade of indie flicks. Fox explains, "These days everybody talks about Sundance but how many people can say they've seen a movie from Sundance? Basically most people are still going to see the latest Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. Most independent film is still on the fringe of culture. It's our job to make it more accessible."

Brendan Peterson [swordfsh@mail.wenet.net] is a critic and writer who covers independent filmmakers and festivals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

WITNESS FOR THE DEFENSE:
THE NEA TAPES

PAUL LAMARRE AND MELISSA WOLF are preaching to the converted. It's December 1999, and the crowd at the Society for Ethical Culture has gathered to hear a forum organized by the New York Civil Liberties Union on the controversy du jour: New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's attack on the Sensation show at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. As ever-tougher battles in the arts for freedom of expression and funding occur, a court decision not to defund the BMA despite the mayoral edict was a notable milestone. A screening of Lamarre and Wolf's video *The NEA Tapes* was an appropriate consciousness-raising highlight of the ACLU event.



Cowboy poet Andy Wilkinson, one of the *NEA Tapes* interviewees.

The NEA Tapes, begun in the wake of Jesse Helms' attacks on government arts funding, is part of an on-going polemic in defense of the National Endowment for the Arts—a politely phrased but angry rant that picks up every few years, responding to each new round of attacks on artists and their work. Essentially a one-hour made-for-TV documentary, *The NEA Tapes*, through a number of one-hour "works-in-progress" made over the five-year period of its making, will also serve as an archive of the state of the arts in the late '90s. Sitting in a cramped East Village bedroom that also serves as an editing and communications center, Lamarre explains why he first felt the project was necessary. "This was a free speech issue. This was about public voice. Now the art world is willing to accept that, but a few years ago? Forget it." Wolf continues, "We were shocked that we had to stoop so low, that we had to explain why art was important."

That tone of frustration pervades the *The NEA Tapes*, echoing through one exasperated interview after another with artists, academics, and curators who have all been affected by the cuts in NEA funding. The one-hour *The NEA Tapes* has now grown into an on-going census of a contemporary arts community that finds itself being driven underground by a political climate that is alternately threateningly reactionary or coolly indifferent.

Lamarre and Wolf, both media artists who have created video projects and gallery installations, already had a long history of documenting the arts community—and not always in defensive terms. In the 1980s the pair produced *The Chelsea Tapes*, a series of vignettes depicting life in the former flophouse hotel which also functioned as an informal artists' colony. Lamarre notes that "the image of the artist in society at that time was pretty positive, but my mother still didn't understand what an artist was and what they did. So I thought the perfect

COURTESY FILMMAKERS

metaphor was to go in the kitchen and just see how they ate." The result was *The Starving Artists' Cookbook*, with recipes from the likes of John Cage and Louise Bourgeois.

It was on a trip to Europe in 1995 with the cookbook that *The NEA Tapes* first began to take shape. "Going to Russia and seeing how underground artists collaborated got us thinking about how screwed up the competitive system was in New York," Wolf says. She imagined that the new project would look at the ways "artists [were] not really working together or having a community together." But upon returning to the U.S., she and Lamarre found the creative community not only fractured, but under assault.

Suddenly the questions changed. When Newt Gingrich threatened in 1995 to cut off funding to the arts endowment, who really was being attacked? And why? For Wolf the conclusion was simple: "It's not just about some New York artist putting a crucifix in urine. The NEA actually funds the voices of people who are economically repressed all over the country." On a trip to Washington to interview New York Democratic Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Lamarre and Wolf encountered members of the Christian Action Network organizing what the group called a "Degenerate Art Show," an unironically frightening echo of the Nazi party's attack on modernist art. Although the filmmakers had a screening of their work last October, with a presentation by Nadler, there has been no official feedback yet from Capitol Hill. "We don't see this as an advocacy piece," says Wolf. "We're just giving voice to those who don't normally have a voice in the media."

And while *The NEA Tapes* includes interviews with Andres Serrano, Kiki Smith, and numerous other New York artists, the true heart of the film becomes apparent in footage from their cross-country trip. First, the duo shows C-Span clips of Republican Congressman Dick Armey describing cuts for the NEA as a David-and-Goliath battle against the "New York art elite." The tape then notes that artists nationwide get less government funding—about $100 million—than does the U.S. military band. Lamarre and Wolf then take us to the small town of Amana, Iowa, where NEA funds sponsored the state's first community theater. We then go to Texas, where NEA funding helped revive the lost art of cowboy poetry and sponsored a circle of Native American basket weavers. It's as effective as any political stump speech.

"[Artists] are a perfect target," Lamarre notes. Far from being a unified elite, the artistic community's true diversity works against it. "It's like an army of soldiers that just runs around in circles. They don't know how to organize themselves into a group." This has been demonstrated by the recent controversies over the Sensation show (particularly a painting by British/Nigerian artist, Chris Ofili of a black Madonna ornamented with elephant dung, a symbol of rebirth) and an exhibition by artist Jef Bourgeau at the Detroit Institute for the Arts (where last November interim director Graham W.J. Beal shut down Bourgeau's Art of the 20th Century show because of its perceived racial undertones); as long as artists fail to put up a strong defense, the attacks will keep on coming. In the film, Andres Serrano accuses the NEA's supporters of "ducking the blows of a bully." Lamarre notes bitterly that "maybe in another decade we'd have a more courageous art world, but right now it's a bunch of wimps."

"You can only look to influence those people who are ready to be influenced. It's a long-term project of education," he says. To that end, *The NEA Tapes* have become an on-going archive, documenting the litany of voices that cry out after each new attack on the arts and, the videomakers hope, eventually inspiring those voices to become a single shout of protest.

Experimental filmmaker Ken Miller [theuptownboy@earthlink.net], has supported himself working at Film Arts Foundation, writing for Rough Guides *and* CitySearch, *and wrangling bikini girls for rap videos.*

OBITUARIES

Herb Schiller died Jan. 29 at La Jolla, CA. A lecturer and writer on communication, he was an outspoken critic of commercial television and corporate control of the medium. He was involved in Paper Tiger Television from its inception and was writer of a number of influential works including *Mass Communications and American Empire*. Schiller was also a former lecturer at New York's City College, the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, and the University of Illinois at Urbana before moving to the University of California, San Diego in 1970 where he remained as professor of communication until his retirement in 1990.

Robert Kramer (1939-1999), co-founder of director-producer cooperative Alpha 60 and of the Newsreel movement, died Nov. 10 in Rouen, France. A prolific director of leftist and socially aware docs shot in Vietnam (*People's War*), Portugal (*Gestos e Fragmentos*), Angola, and Latin America, Kramer settled in Europe in the early '80s where he continued to make thought-provoking work. Kramer was also co-screenwriter on Wim Wenders' *The State of Things* (1981), an actor (Cedric Kahn's *L'Ennui*), poet, playwright, and short story writer.

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WELCOM

Los Angeles Spotlight

To try to assess the current L.A. media scene is immediately to come face to face with the realization—one often glibly repeated by out-of-towners— that there is no L.A. media scene. Instead of an absence, however, there is an abundance, with multiple, often conflicting and contradictory spots of mediamaking dotting a landscape traditionally seen only in the shadow of the omnipresent Hollywood sign and the industrial practice it represents. However, if you look closely, the sign itself is in disrepair—even the recent attempt in January to bring the once glorious icon to light as a welcome to the new millennium came off more as a pathetic party joke than a big-time, Hollywood spectacle. And that may be the appropriate metaphor with which to begin.

Hollywood is desperately trying to reckon with its increasing lack of power at about the same rate that filmmakers are finding new distribution and exhibition outlets and a new, low-cost mode of production. Just in terms of a feature film practice, there is a sense of urgency to find either the newest cutting-edge gem (i.e. moneymaker) or to produce the next blockbuster while nearly every day, another dot.com company announces its foray into an entirely new form of media production and consumption.

And in place of the old Hollywood school there's a new generation of feature filmmakers trained in film history but weaned on the glorious rags-to-riches narratives that propel the current indie scene. In other words, they're just as savvy about the seductive pleasures (and political ramifications) of a well-told story as they are hungry for their rightful passage into the good life, garnered, of course, only through marketing oneself as something worth buying, and by proving adept at generating strong box office receipts. And they're proficient at working the system, begging, borrowing, stealing—and then happily signing on for two- and three-

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picture deals when the studios come calling.

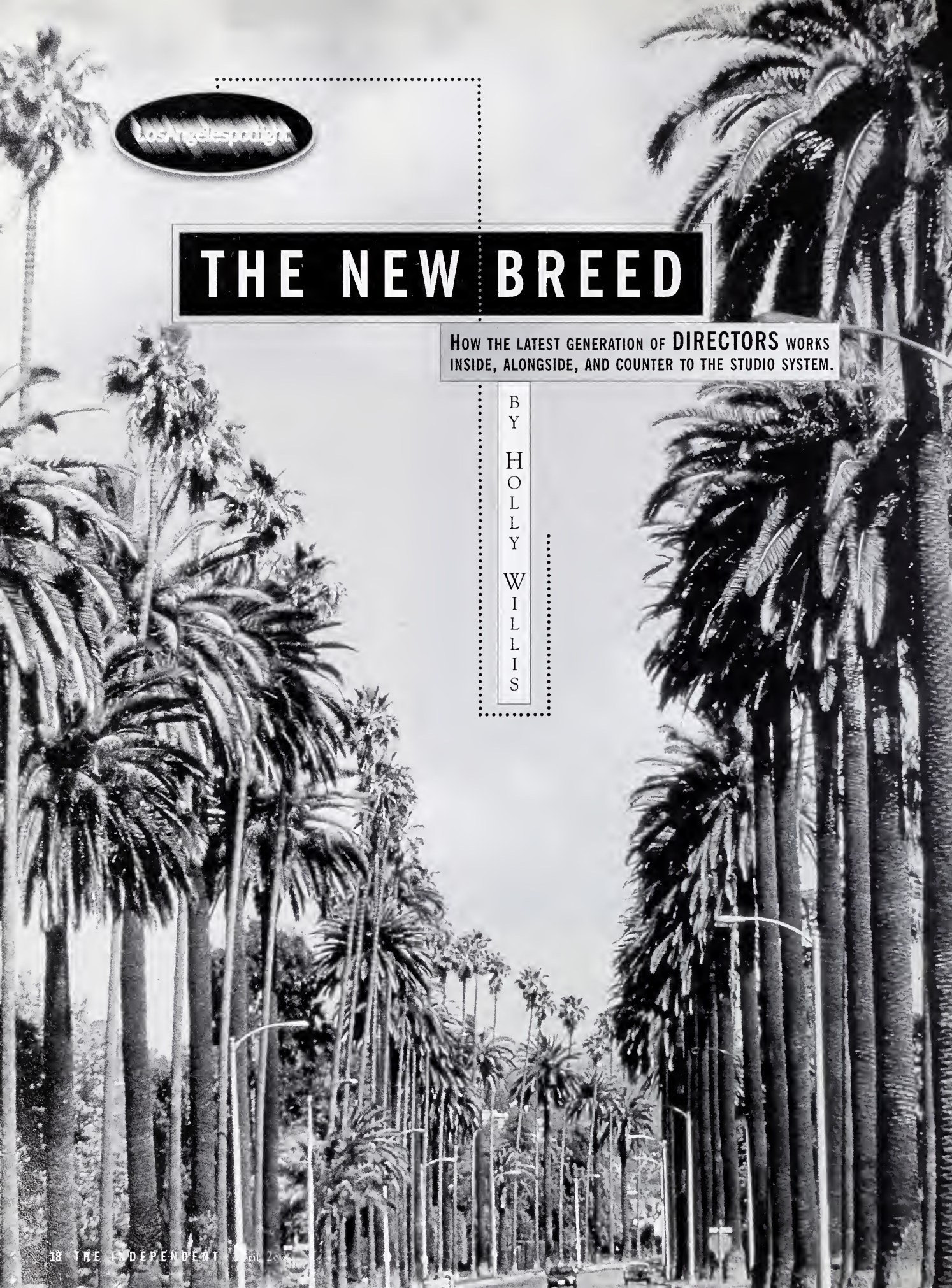
This generation is balanced by an implacable theory-wielding activist sector, a group whose members hold day-jobs at local universities and insistently continue to produce work and events despite the gradual dissolution of almost all recognizable support, both financial and institutional.

And then there's the "old guard independents," filmmakers and artists who have formed a remarkably solid foundation of experimental practice in a shaky landscape. From James Benning, who continues to make approximately one feature each year, each one as rigorously structured as the last, to Nina Menkes, whose own output rate is a bit slower but no less committed to an insistent investigation of narrative possibilities, the city can boast its share of experimentalists. Add Betzy Bromberg, Charles Burnett, Morgan Fisher, the Yonemoto brothers, Susan Mogul, and in a younger generation, Chris Munch, Gregg Araki, Britta Sjogren—it's easy to see that one of L.A.'s most prized treasures is also one of its least often recognized.

And then there is the burgeoning new media sector, with theorists like Art Center's Peter Lunenfeld, UCLA's Vivian Sobchack, and USC's Marsha Kinder pushing the discussion forward, while a dazzling array of artists construct entirely new kinds of media experiences.

So there is no single scene here; instead, there's a bunch of disparate communities spread out across a sprawling cityscape, each one borrowing resources supplied by the larger industry and refunctioning them toward various ends. Does this issue cover all of these communities and media artists? Hardly! Instead, we offer a smattering of profiles and introductions that hint at the diversity here, and suggest L.A.'s direction for the future.

HOLLY WILLIS, GUEST EDITOR



Los Angeles spotlight

THE NEW BREED

How the latest generation of DIRECTORS works inside, alongside, and counter to the studio system.

BY HOLLY WILLIS

In the early 1990s, a small cadre of recent film school grads, including Gregg Araki, Chris Munch, Britta Sjogren, Caveh Zahedi, and Everett Lewis, defined a new Los Angeles independent film movement with a body of ultra-low budget feature films that eschewed the narrative and aesthetic constraints of the city they called home. These films, while extremely diverse in style and theme, nevertheless shared an enthusiasm for the promise of narrative filmmaking as a mutable and evolving form, as well as a modernist aspiration for the political possibilities of a radical formal style. And the filmmakers, educated by the work of Godard, Wenders, Herzog, and Varda, seemed propelled by a sense of urgency and commitment that not only sets them apart from their L.A. peers, but made their films seem fresh, interesting, new.

The films were duly celebrated and made the rounds of the festivals, but they never truly crystallized into an L.A. filmmaking movement. Instead, they came to represent one moment in an evolving historical and aesthetic flux, one that mingles ideas about art, money, and politics and tries to support idealist notions in a world of financing and box office returns. Several of the films made it into theaters, some went undistributed. And the filmmakers? They seemed to be caught, like fish out of water, in a culture and an industry that didn't quite know what to make of them.

Since then, ultra-low budget filmmaking has become de rigeur, especially with the new digital tools, and filmmakers have become increasingly shrewd about their choices and the extent to which politics and the market conflict. They know all too well about the dire domestic distribution scene, and what the foreign marketplace needs and wants. Which is not to say that they've sold out. Instead, a current spate of new L.A. filmmakers boasts an attitude that's feisty, savvy, and bold, but one that's often upholstered with a snazzy, marketable sheen.

Looks Good on Film

Take Mary Kuryla's debut feature *Freak Weather*, which premiered last fall in Toronto and recently screened to critical acclaim in Rotterdam. The story of a woman's growing understanding of herself in relation to both her violent partner and her needy child, the film enters tough terrain and refuses glib, easy answers. And while the film is bold and brash, full of excess and swagger and messy, heartfelt passion, all of that can be shrewdly construed as "edgy" in prosaic marketing parlance.

But what's more significant is Kuryla's desire to push the edges of propriety for female characters. "I was interested in taking several male tropes," explains Kuryla, "a male style of writing and the fucked up male character, and seeing what they would be like with a female character. So one way to see the story is as a transposition of these tropes onto a female."

Kuryla adds that Penny, her protagonist (played with jittery intensity by Jacqueline McKenzie) is a Jack Kerouac sort of figure who gets caught up in her own lasso. "She sets herself up for some idea she has about herself, and she tells her lies and her stories, but her stories are about bravado. And that's what I like about her—there's this kind of romantic maleness to her that just is not permitted for women."

Kuryla's thematic antecedents might be Lizzie Borden and Barbara Loden, but her style doesn't want to flaunt budgetary constraints. The film was shot on luscious 35mm with careful attention to color and set design. But inside this neatly packaged narrative wrapper lie some rather sticky ideas. This combination of gloss and challenging subject matter seems to be one strategy shared by a current crop of L.A. indies.

Miguel Arteta, whose 1994 film *Star Maps* brought to the cultural fore a group of people invisible in contemporary L.A., recently screened his newest film, *Chuck and Buck*, in dramatic competition at the Sundance Film Festival. Like Kuryla, Arteta, too, wants to push boundaries and admits that he had trouble finding financing for his discomfiting tale of desire out of bounds. "No one wanted to give me the money," he says. Rather than rewrite to appease queasy money men, Arteta opted to shoot on DV (and worked to secure distribution with Open City's DV arm, Blow Up Pictures).

Although he shot with the less expensive format, Arteta's film slides under the production value radar with a sense of sophistication and attention to aesthetics that, again, refuse to equate a rough story with a rough look. Rather than hand-made and low cost, the film looks decidedly professional; Arteta made use of the format's unusual palette and created images that seem tinted and vaguely surreal, perfectly underscoring the story's simultaneous familiarity and sense of the uncanny.

Cauleen Smith, whose feature debut, *Drylongso*, screened last year at Sundance, shares the drive to tell an untold story and to use narrative to do it. "The premise of the film is that black men are an endangered species," she notes. "In *Drylongso* a young woman decides to use her camera to document these men, but in the process begins to realize that she, too, is in jeopardy." While Smith opts to foreground hand-made tropes in her film, the decidedly experimental filmmaker knew that a narrative story was the only vehicle that was going to get her ideas in front of a paying audience.

Yet another new L.A. feature is Jamie Babbit's crowd-pleasing *But I'm a Cheerleader*, which screened in Toronto and more recently at



Looks do matter, as Miguel Arteta's handsomely shot DV film *Chuck & Buck* makes clear.

Sundance. Featuring Natasha Lyonne as a cheerleader shuttled off to a homo-rehab camp and Clea DuVall as the young dyke who makes her consider her latent tendencies, the film plays with stereotypes, both straight and gay, and disrupts convention, but in a way that's more charming than disturbing, and with a style that, frankly, looks good rather than bad. And this is important to Babbit. "I tend to like movies with more experimentation," she says. "I don't like gritty realism, and I think while you see a lot of that in films from New York, in L.A. people tend to be more attentive to aesthetics."

That said, however, in a city where on any given day you're apt to find several porn productions in Van Nuys, episodes of the latest TV shows shooting in Venice, a studio feature crowding the public parking lots at the beach in Santa Monica, and at least a dozen indie superstar wannabes blocking shots with unknowns hidden in apartments all over L.A., what, finally, unifies an L.A. filmmaking scene? Clearly nobody knows, but there are a few things that make independent filmmaking here unique.



No, it's not a canine *Blue Velvet*, it's Mary Kuryla's equally adventurous *Freak Weather*.

Studio City

First, many people would argue that the easy access to filmmaking resources—whether it's equipment or crews—shows. "I think the films here are much more proficient in terms of production value because of the skill level of crews here," explains Scott King, an L.A.-based producer and director whose decidedly experimental feature *Treasure Island* screened at Sundance in 1999. "This of course doesn't mean that the films are necessarily better," he hastens to add with a laugh.

Babbit agrees. "The crews here are great. They're very experienced because they work all the time. They've done commercials, Corman films, and music videos, so they're very professional." Babbit also points out that filmmakers can find materials and tools that they'd never find anywhere else. "You have access to all of these studio luxuries," she says. "We got some of our costumes for *Cheerleader* from one of the studios, for example, and we piggybacked on a commercial company to do our Avid editing."

Matthew Greenfield, producer of both *Star Maps* and *Chuck and Buck*, notes further advantages of living in a studio city. "The whole town is set up for production," he says. "So you can get absolutely everything you need, from the major things like cranes to the most minor things like replacement parts for a camera. And, if you have the money, you can get these things 24 hours a day, seven days a week." Greenfield notes that these benefits favor the wealthy and can unfortunately work against the low-budget filmmaker. "The disadvantage is that the whole town also knows about rates and what they can get. Locations, for example, are very expensive because people are used to getting paid a lot."

King agrees and notes that things get very expensive. "We did a scene in San Francisco and shut down an entire street for $200. In L.A., even just shooting in your home costs $500 a day if you get a permit."

That said, however, some of the city's guilds are trying to be more amenable. "Over the last three years, the DGA and SAG have both opened up a lot of possibilities," King says.

Dawn Hudson, director of the Independent Feature Project/West, notes that the presence of TV in L.A. is another big advantage. "As a low budget independent filmmaker here you can find great deals using the TV industry. When they are on hiatus, for example, all of those crews and resources are completely available." She continues, "And I think the same is true with talent. Because so many actors live here, you just have a kind of access that's unbeatable."

Switch Hitting

The emphasis on access also means that the divide separating studio and independent filmmaking can get pretty permeable. As Andrea Sperling, a producer whose first projects were with Araki and who now boasts a long list of indie film credits, notes, "There are a lot of filmmakers who start small, and then work up, and they do that a lot faster here."



While that may be true, it's also increasingly possible for established filmmakers to try more adventurous projects. "I think it's getting easier and easier for people to move back and forth between the independent sphere and studio projects," claims Peter Broderick, president of Next Wave Films, an Independent Film Channel company devoted to championing low-budget independent filmmaking. Sperling agrees. "Think about it: Just last year we saw films by Spike Jonze, Alexander Payne, Wes Anderson, and David O. Russell. When these filmmakers move from the independent world into studio films, they continue to make interesting films."



(Top): Tinka Menkes in *Magdalena Viraga*, directed by Nina Menkes, one of L.A.'s experimental stalwarts.

Prolific and provocative Gregg Araki has set films such as *The Living End* (pictured) in L.A.'s less visible locations.

One of the places where this is most evident is with the IFP/West's annual Spirit Awards, the independent riposte to the industry's Academy Awards. Coming up on its 15th year, the Spirit Awards has become a must-attend event by independent producers and more studio-oriented execs alike, and it's sold out long in advance.

While in the past often criticized for being a bit too attentive to the industry and not attentive enough to the needs of working filmmakers, the IFP/West has revamped its programs in response. Now the organization not only offers special series geared specifically to the nuts and bolts of filmmaking (like seminars on shooting digital video) but even has several cameras available for rent. The organization also offers free legal consultations and discounted production insurance. "The growth in our membership over the last five years has meant that we can use those numbers to get huge discounts for filmmakers," says Hudson.

In thinking more about the complex relationship between the studios and independent filmmakers, Broderick notes that the back-and-forth movement here in L.A. has influenced the hopes and fantasies of a collective filmmaking consciousness. "People used to come to L.A. with a clear idea of a career path that they could aspire to. But filmmakers now come more for the critical mass of film people and equipment that they'll find, and the career path isn't nearly as straightforward."

Broderick also cheerfully notes that, contrary to popular opinion, filmmakers in Los Angeles are kind to each other. "There's a sense of generosity here that can be surprising," he says. "People really help each other out a lot." And several filmmakers have noted that they have yet to feel the kind of bickering and backstabbing that they say characterizes the filmmaking scene in New York.

And for Greenfield, the diversity of production here cancels out any sense of snobbery. "There's no prejudice here in terms of the kinds of work you do. People can do anything here, and they do."

L.A. Look and Feel

Given all of this diversity, to say that Los Angeles is schizophrenic is to say the obvious. But the city's disparate attributes appeal to filmmakers—the city offers myriad guises to fit the mood and tone of almost any story. Just think of the many filmmakers who have captured the "authentic" vision of L.A. There's Gregg Araki's neon-lit, dismal cityscapes in *Totally Fucked Up* and *The Living End*, or, in stark contrast, Adam Goldberg's black and white *Scotch and Milk* and its sparkling homage to a downtown that no longer exists. And the recent *Magnolia* showcases the Valley and its own special sense of desolation, while Quentin Lee's flamboyant *Shopping for Fangs* channels both Godard and John Woo to picture the city's nascent energy and violence along with its beauty and playfulness.


From Scott King's unorthodox *Treasure Island*

Greenfield, for his part, likes the city's mutability. "There's something chameleon-like about L.A.," he says. "When a film is shot in New York, it looks like a film shot in New York. That just isn't true here. The city looks totally different every ten blocks."

The city also feels very different every ten blocks, offering divergent havens for creative work. For Kuryla, who lives 15 minutes away from civilization in the woodsy, coyote-populated canyons of Topanga, L.A. offers the best of two worlds. "I like the fact that I can live in the wilderness and yet have easy and immediate access to the city," she says. "And I tend to work internally, so I don't like the distractions of a city's environment. I want to be able to be very focused when I'm writing, for example, and I can do that here."

Kuryla also favors the city's forthright love of money. "I think that as much as I like certain traditions, this place eschews tradition in favor of being totally commerce-oriented. And there's something about that irreverence that I really like."

The Dismal Fate of the L.A. Auteur

Because there is such an emphasis on commerce here, the support and understanding for wholly art-driven filmmakers is practically nil. "I think it's very hard for the auteurist independent filmmakers here," comments Kuryla. "It's hard to be respected for having an auteurist vision in this town because the assumption is always—always—that you're doing calling cards to get into the industry."

Of course, many filmmakers are not working their way into the industry; if anything, they're working in the opposite direction. King's *Treasure Island*, for example, does not aspire to classical Hollywood storytelling, nor do the films made by people as divergent as Allison Anders and Charles Burnett.

And yet outsiders tend to think that the city's filmmakers are all just waiting for their big studio break. "The generalizations always disparage L.A.," says Broderick. "There's this sense that we're all working the shadow of Hollywood and therefore we're somehow already coopted, that we all just can't wait to sign with CAA or William Morris. But when you look at a Chris Munch or a Nina Menkes, I'm sorry, but you just don't worry about these filmmakers being seduced by a studio deal."

According to Rich Raddon, an independent producer and the new director of the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, the attention to very noncommercial filmmaking is growing. "I would say that, over the last two years, more and more filmmakers in L.A. are adopting a more guerilla-oriented mode of filmmaking. They're buying short ends and just going out and shooting, and whereas they used to be influenced by being so aware of the marketplace, that seems to be fading. I've recently seen some of the best guerrilla films I've ever seen, and they were shot here."

Raddon also points out that production in the city continues to grow—approximately 40% of the 1,600–1,700 films he gets as submissions are made in L.A., and membership in the IFP/West has grown significantly over the last five years. "Silverlake is starting a film festival," he notes, "and the downtown loft scene is interesting in terms of production, and Venice is also very active." Indeed, one of the most potentially interesting Venice groups is Zero Pictures, a collective of filmmakers who share resources, producing multiple features simultaneously.

So while today's crop of filmmakers offers subversive ideals wrapped up in pretty packages, and reflects in interesting ways a calculated response to the variables of an unforgiving marketplace, the next crop may offer a return to the down-and-dirty mode of production that marked the city almost a decade ago. But it's important to remember that trend-spotting in Los Angeles is a losing game; everything shifts too quickly here.

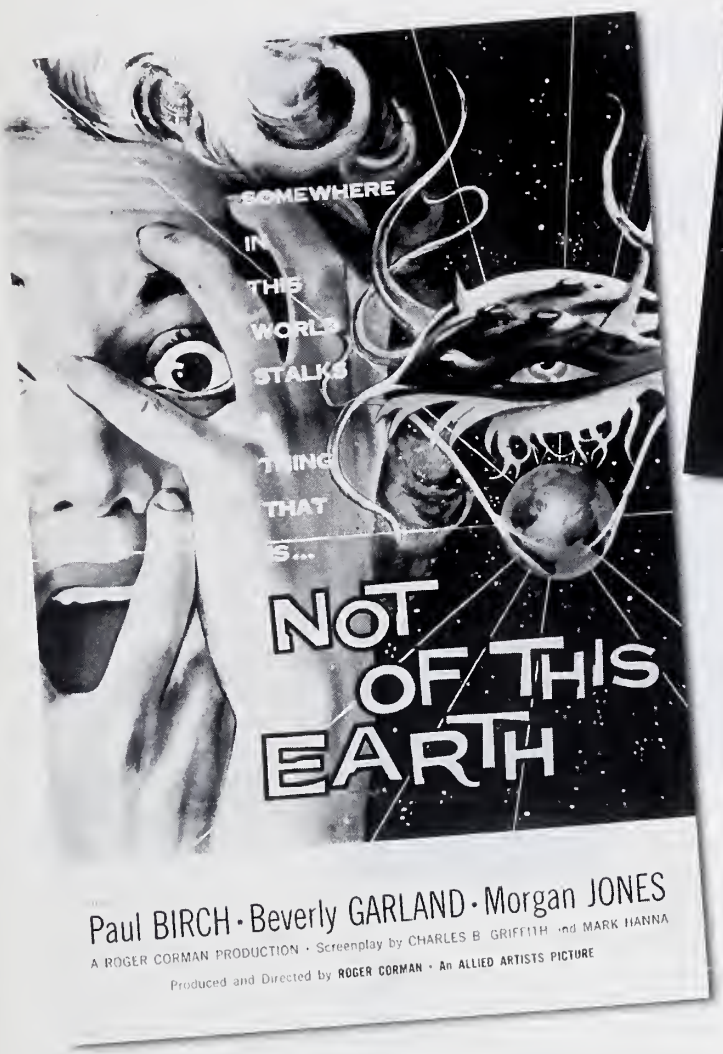
To sum up, then: Access, numbers, resources—and let's not forget the good weather—L.A. seems to have it all. And despite out-of-towner skepticism about Los Angeles as a true home of indie filmmaking, Sperling makes an interesting point: "Everyone eventually has to come to L.A.," she says. "That's where the money is. You can go to a certain level other places, but eventually you come to L.A."

Holly Willis is senior editor at IFILM.

THE OLD WEST

HOLLYWOOD'S ORIGINAL INDEPENDENTS

BY KATE HAUG



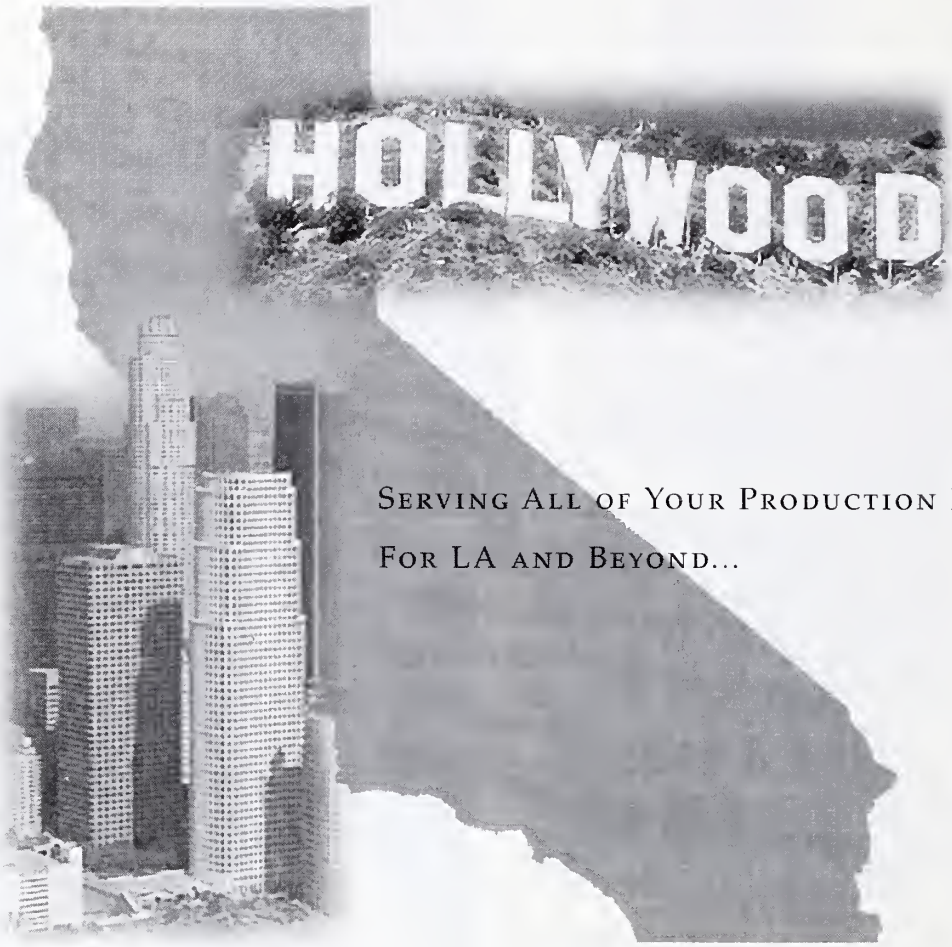


(clockwise from left): Schlock maestro Roger Corman mastered the art of turning cheap thrills into cult favorites.
From avant-garde pioneer Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*
Ewe've got another thing coming: Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep.*

IN A 1975 INTERVIEW, JOHN Cassavetes gave an amorphous, emotive definition of "independent filmmaker." After listing Robert Altman, Martin Scorsese, Elaine May, and Shirley Clark among his creative peers, Cassavetes, who mortgaged his own home in L.A. to produce A *Woman Under the Influence*, said, "It's hard to explain what 'independence' means—but to those who have it, film is still a mystery, not a way out."

Cassavetes' definition provides one framework within which to view the historical roots of L.A.'s independent feature film scene. While newer generations of filmmakers may see independent film as a way into Hollywood, Cassavetes and other mavericks of his generation had a different agenda. Though vastly different in style, directors Russ Meyer, Roger Corman, and Melvin Van Peebles were, like Cassavetes, avid genre-busters, developing and mining controversial genres in the shadow of Hollywood, including horror, gore, sexploitation, and blaxploitation. For these filmmakers, independent cinema wasn't a genre but, as Cassavetes suggested, a way of thinking about the possibilities of cinema.

Meyer, known for gems like *The Immoral Mr. Teas* (1959) and *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), is often quoted as saying his films were made for lust as well as profit. While he may not have impressed anyone with the earnings on these movies, he nonetheless made a healthy profit throughout his career. Significantly, the only studio picture Meyer ever made, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970), was contracted by 20th Century Fox to remedy the studio's failing ledger book. And although Meyer likes to tout his interest in sex and money, his work neverthe-



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less bears the mark of an unfettered vision.

Prior to the 1960s and, in particular, the millions of dollars made by the low-budget hit *Easy Rider* in 1969, "low budget" and "exploitation" were characteristics the majors avoided; similarly, the interest in questionable social morals, a fondness for low-brow artistry, and the celebration of no-name talent were all anathema to the studios.

But these three characteristics became the bedrock on which Roger Corman built his companies, the notorious American International Pictures and New World (which became Concorde/New Horizons). In addition to producing over 260 films, Corman directed such treats as *Not of This Earth* (1956), *The Wasp Woman* (1959), *X-The Man with the X-Ray Eyes* (1963), *The Wild Angels* (1966), *The Trip* (1967), and *Bloody Mama* (1970), all of which helped to build a new audience for exploitation films. More importantly, however, Corman also schooled several generations of filmmakers and helped establish an alternative distribution and exhibition network that would become the foundation for later indie movements.

Another L.A. icon is Kenneth Anger, who won a landmark obscenity trial after his *Scorpio Rising* (1963) was seized by the LAPD and banned in Los Angeles. Anger helped usher in a radical new gay sexual sensibility, as well as a visceral contempt for Hollywood exemplified in his book *Hollywood Babylon*.

Other factors that influenced the radical shifts in American cinema in the 1960s included the fact that UCLA and USC began to attract film students who were influenced by the French New Wave, documentary filmmaking, and the psychedelic world that surrounded them. Equally important, midnight movie venues were being transformed into arthouse theaters. Meanwhile, the so-called 'New Hollywood'—Robert Altman (*M.A.S.H.*, 1970), Peter Bogdanovich (*The Last Picture Show*, 1970), Francis Ford Coppola (*The Rain People*, 1969), Bob Rafelson (*Five Easy Pieces*, 1970), Martin Scorsese (*Mean Streets*, 1973), and Haskell Wexler (*Medium Cool*, 1969)—represented the merger that was happening between underground film, political consciousness, and more experimental feature forms. These filmmakers moved towards a cinema that abandoned traditional studio formulas, but was not relegated to the social margins. And this in turn marked a powerful shift in the perception of independent filmmaking. (It's important to note the extent to which this transition from low-brow gore to arthouse intellectual was made possible by Roger Corman. Coppola, Hopper, and Scorsese all worked for him early in their careers.)

Concurrent with this new era of filmmaking by the dominant white culture was the production of Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* in 1971. This black avant-garde comeback to the Watts riots captured the expansive cultural potential of radical politics. Entirely self-produced, aesthetically revolutionary, and wildly lucrative, Van Peebles' film ignited a new genre of exploitation films. The merits of blaxploitation as a commercial genre are debatable, but Van Peebles' film did open the doors for African American filmmakers.

In the 1970s a host of African American students at UCLA (including Carroll Parrot Blue, Charles Burnett, Julie Dash, and Billy Woodberry) started producing independent work that would lead the way into contemporary discussion around the politics of race and representation. Dubbed the "L.A. Rebellion," these filmmakers challenged traditional narrative and formal structures while showcasing the lives of black Americans. Charles Burnett's exquisite *Killer of Sheep* (1977), for example, portrays the life of a slaughter house worker and his family in Los Angeles, while Julie Dash's short films, including *Four Women* (1975), address the role of African American women. These filmmakers and other politically motivated groups used the university environment of the late '60s, '70s, and '80s to capture the means of production and control their race's on-screen representation. From this history we see the rise of features like Cauleen Smith's recent feature debut, *Drylongso*, as well as Quentin Lee's *Shopping for Fangs*.

The definition of independent filmmaking will continue to change as the film business adapts to new technologies and niche markets. The world of B-movie distribution has evaporated, while cable and the Internet offer new venues for independently produced work. If we look at the roots and evolution of the Los Angeles independent filmmaking scene, however, the world changed not only at the micro level of production and distribution, but also through the immense cultural and political events that transpired. Independent filmmaking tends to respond to the world, as well as to unconventional desires, no matter how perverse, scatological, or revolutionary they are. In Cassavetes' definition, it is the desire to explore this uncharted, unseen, and unpredictable territory that provides independence. From sexploitation films to LSD-inspired narratives to blaxploitation, Los Angeles filmmakers in the past found the mystery and the magic in the medium.

Kate Haug is working on a urban renewal project in Los Angeles. Her roadway improvement plan includes broadcasting Santana on loudspeakers and planting hemp in the meridians. Suggestions are welcome.

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LA's MEDIA RENEGADES

ONE OF THE LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT LOS ANGELES IS THAT the city is home to some of the most diverse and cutting-edge experimental media production in the world. The scene has a long history stretching back to the 1920s, but it also has a very current presence, thanks to the content of numerous artists whose work brings together a commitment to theoretical sophistication, stylistic innovation, and political engagement. Many of these artists express their faith in the power of alternative media by performing in multiple capacities, making films, videos, or multimedia projects while also teaching, writing, and curating. Among these media artists are William Jones, Erika Suderburg, Tran T. Kim-Trang, Jesse Lerner, and Ming-Yuen S. Ma. For these makers, "independence" is a necessity rather than a marketing strategy—they do not aspire to a three-picture deal with the latest entertainment giant. Although their work is widely disparate both formally and thematically, together these artists constitute a strong, smart, and much needed alternative presence in a city that, thanks to general funding cuts, has almost no remaining infrastructure to support them.

WILLIAM JONES

An Ohio native with degrees from Yale and CalArts, William Jones has emerged as one of L.A.'s most articulate and iconoclastic filmmakers. In his rigorously structured and densely erudite film and video work, Jones has developed a unique mode of historical-etymological exposition which highlights the entangled operations of history, politics, economics, and sexuality. His work is both highly personal—by turns confessional, autobiographical, and analytical—while always remaining politically charged.

The appropriation of images—both from domestic and industrial sources—plays an important role in much of Jones' work, ranging from the use of his father's frantically neurotic home movies in *Massillon* to the operatic power plays enacted in Eastern European porn video which he excerpts in *The Fall of Communism . . . as Seen in Gay Pornography*. Likewise, in *Finished*, Jones pairs images of gay porn star Alan Lambert with scenes from Frank Capra's *Meet John Doe* in order to investigate the relationship between Hollywood and the porn industry and the complex interplay of images and desire.

For Jones, Los Angeles offers both opportunities and likely frustrations to those seeking to combine art with political engagement. He notes that "there is a fundamental contradiction between the individualism encouraged by the American cultural establishment and the solidarity required for concerted political action. It's no surprise that independent filmmakers usually make diffuse and ineffectual collectives. Like academics, they are notoriously difficult to organize."

> **"Los Angeles tends to be a haven for isolated crackpots. When people ask me about movements or scenes in L.A., I have trouble answering their questions, since I'm one of those crackpots."**
>
> ***— William Jones***

Los Angeles' legendary geographical dispersion also contributes to a pervasive sense of fragmentation and disunity even among members of the relatively small community dedicated to alternative media. According to Jones, "Los Angeles tends to be a haven for isolated crackpots. When people ask me about movements or scenes in L.A., I have trouble answering their questions, since I'm one of those crackpots." Nonetheless, his work has received support from several of the city's existing institutions, including Filmforum, the California Community Foundation, and a now-defunct program at the AFI. "I can't claim a total isolation. I suspect that film culture here is just a bit less abject than it is in most of the rest of the United States, though I know that's not saying much."

Jones also emphasizes the interconnections between industrial production in the city and its double in alternative circles. "My work, and for that matter the work of any other filmmaker, would be impossible without the film industry. The materials making up the entire apparatus of production are industrial products under the direct or indirect control of monopolies." Although his work clearly resides at the "experimental" end of the independent feature film spectrum, Jones professes a certain fascination with narrative and the aspirations of certain industrial productions. "In Southern California, it is virtually impossible to exist in some sort of anti-Hollywood cocoon, an illusory place to reside, in any event. The whole infrastructure is here, though getting access to the means of production can be extremely frustrating. A powerful mythology clings to the state of being taken seriously in Hollywood, and it is very difficult to distance oneself from that."

ERIKA SUDERBURG

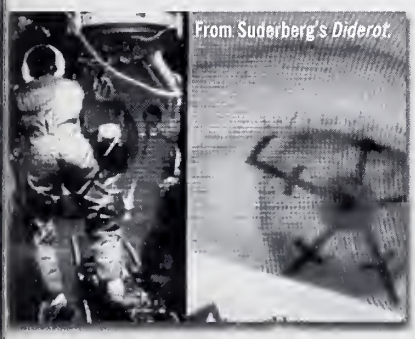
With a body of video work that ranges from the conceptual sublime (a naked woman languorously swimming backstroke across the frame in *Waiting for Transmission*), to the historically specific (an evocation of what it must have been like to be the pilot

Steve Anderson

who has just dropped a bomb in *Displayed Termination: The Interval Between Death*, Erika Suderburg is one of L.A.'s most prolific and versatile practitioners of marginal media.

In addition to teaching in the Film and Visual Culture program at UC Riverside, Suderburg has edited two books on video and installation art: *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices* (with Michael Renov) and *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. She is currently completing an experimental documentary about Los Angeles, and her work was the subject of a recent retrospective at L.A.'s Film Forum. In her video and installation work, Suderburg brings a rare combination of understated humor and theoretical sophistication to issues of gender, ideology, and the politics of representation.

Suderburg's various roles as teacher, writer, curator and artist are linked by a commitment to advocacy for marginal media.


From Suderberg's *Diderot.*

"People who are interested in marginal practices have to work hard to keep connected, which is why people like [L.A. Freewaves founder] Anne Bray have been so important," she says. "In the eighties the AFI, Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA), Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibition (LACE), and the Long Beach Museum all had very supportive programs and now all of it is gone. These kinds of institutions created communities that just can't be replaced by a once-a-year festival. And this fetishization of the Internet can definitely never be a substitute for it."

The loss of institutional support in Los Angeles has been coupled with shifts in exhibition and distribution which further threaten the future of alternative media. (National funding cuts over the last seven years have hit L.A. hard. The Long Beach Museum, for example, once a central source for new video art, now rarely programs video, and its Annex is no longer readily available for artists.) "People think it can be replaced by people at home with their computers, but that's not *community*," Suderburg insists. "The Internet is a fundamentally isolating activity which displaces a lot of what's interesting about marginalized practice. Artists also used to do a lot more curating and large festivals used to have significant experimental components, but now they've gotten very conservative. It makes for a very boring climate."

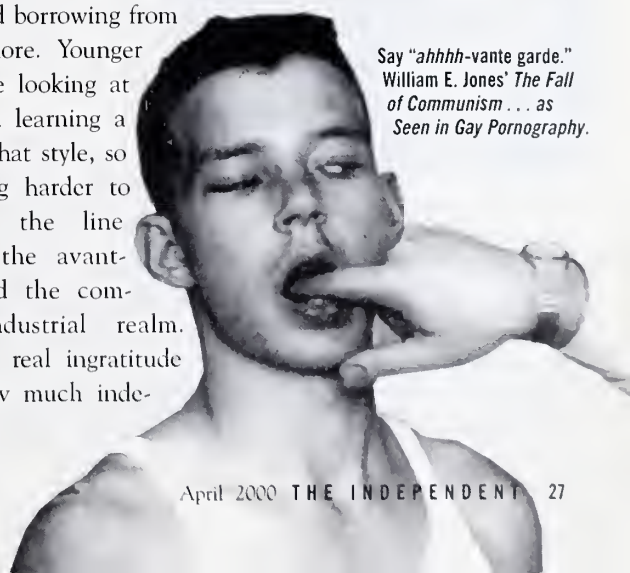
Somewhat ironically, Suderburg cites the presence of the film industry in Hollywood as one of the primary advantages of working in Los Angeles. "Hollywood is completely cathected to my work. I'm not in the industry, but I work with people who are. There's a core of underutilized talent—people who don't get to do their own work or exercise their creativity—that I can tap into." For Suderburg, this tactical appropriation of the industry's productive apparatus gives her work some of its political edge. "My work is not 'activist' in the traditional sense, but I am engaged in various forms of political subterfuge. At one level, just being in the margins and making work that is not a dominant narrative is itself political."

Tran T. Kim-Trang

It is a rare video that brings the language of psychoanalytic theory into the traditional realms of documentary and video activism—and a rare video artist who is equally comfortable talking about Freud and the Khmer Rouge. In her work, L.A.-based videomaker and assistant professor of Media Studies at Scripps College Tran T. Kim-Trang insists on bringing these two worlds together. "My work is definitely informed by theory," she reports. "What I try to do is bridge the academic realm and the public arena. I don't try to reach everybody, but I'd like to put the two together."

Tran sees no contradiction in bridging the historical divides between theory and practice, form and content. "Hopefully if you're versed in theory, then maybe the ideas will be challenging to you even if you don't share the politics of the work. And if you're politically savvy, then maybe you'll start to think about formalist values without just falling back into modernism and assuming that all experimental work is inaccessible and politically retrograde. For me, form and content really go hand in hand, and from that point of melding we can go on to another level of engagement and discussion."

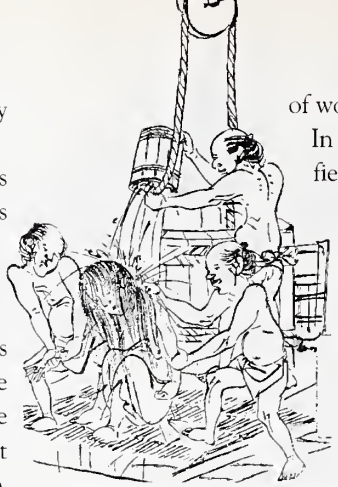
Although her background is in studio art (with an MFA from CalArts) and she works primarily in video, Tran's teaching has been swept in the direction of interactive media, web design, digital video production, and motion graphics. Partly as a result of these new technologies, she sees an erosion of the distinctions between commercial production and underground, experimental work. "We've come full circle now—it's not just Hollywood borrowing from us any more. Younger people are looking at MTV and learning a lot from that style, so it's getting harder to delineate the line between the avant-garde and the commercial-industrial realm. There's a real ingratitude about how much inde-


Say "*ahhhh*-vante garde." William E. Jones' *The Fall of Communism . . . as Seen in Gay Pornography.*

PHOTOS P. 27-29 COURTESY FILMMAKERS

pendent makers have borrowed from the industry. It's hardly ever acknowledged, but I see the relationship as symbiotic."

Unlike many other practitioners in the margins, Tran is hopeful about the future of institutional support for media arts in Los Angeles, particularly as it becomes increasingly cross-fertilized with the energy and aesthetics of other media. "There's definitely a community here, which is pretty supportive and cohesive. It's contentious sometimes, but not as bad as New York. In L.A., the boundaries between different media are not clear cut—partly by virtue of a handful of people like Anne Bray and [Visual Communications director] Linda Mabalot who provide a space and a network to allow the community to expand and spill over into the other visual arts."



From *Ekleipsis*, by Tran T. Kim-Trang

Jesse Lerner

It's a truism of postmodern culture that the difference between truth and fiction is not what it used to be, but for Jesse Lerner this is more than an empty slogan—it's a point of departure. An assistant professor of Media Studies at Pitzer College, Lerner has been making films in and around Los Angeles for over 10 years, bringing a wry humor and critical eye to bear on what he calls "hemispheric histories" and the cultural imbrication of the U.S. and Mexico. His most recent film, *Ruins*, is a feature-length "fake" documentary which exposes the persistence of colonial paradigms in pre-Colombian historiography and calls into question the conventions by which the disciplines of archaeology and art history are constituted.

Although he has ambivalent feelings about it, Lerner confesses to benefiting from his proximity to Hollywood. "David James [film scholar and author of *Allegories of Cinema*] has written perceptively about the ways in which the presence of commercial cinema has shaped all sorts of alternative production practices in L.A., even those which might be thought of (initially) as existing in opposition to the studios. I use the same labs, postproduction facilities, and rental houses as the industrial cinema. So although I might like to think I'm engaged in an oppositional practice, in the end, my relationship to the studios is probably more symbiotic than I'd like to admit."



Preserving the natives in *Ruins*, Jesse Lerner's faux documentary

As a person who is committed to integrating theory with practice, Lerner travels extensively and works to create a wider context for work which might otherwise be defined strictly in regional terms. "When things are going well, I see my various roles—teacher, writer, maker, and curator—as convergent parts of a whole. A lot of what I do involves neither filmmaking nor writing, but working towards building an international community of practitioners, scholars, and venues that support this kind of work."

In Southern California, Lerner identifies a few venues and institutions including L.A. Freewaves and Film Forum as "particularly important in nurturing a creative community of media artists, community activists, and maker/curators with sensibilities attuned to the dynamics of the region." However, he notes that affiliation with an existing community—even if it is composed of like-minded artists, activists, or educators—"implies a negotiation with a set of institutions and traditions that at times may feel like a supportive infrastructure, at other times like a troublesome absence."

Ming-Yuen S. Ma

Technologies shape consciousness, affecting not only what we see, but *how* we see. In an age of camcorders and electronic surveillance, video has become an integral part of identity, creating avenues rich with possibilities for personal expression and, on the negative side, supporting what cultural theorist Donna Harraway has termed the "informatics of domination." In his various roles as artist, teacher, and curator, Ming-Yuen S. Ma has explored both sides of video's schizophrenic nature, while serving as one of L.A.'s most avid proponents of alternative media.

In his work, Ma brings post-structural theory to bear on highly personal issues of diasporic identity, sexual politics, and nomadic existence. His current project, *Mother/Land*, for example, charts the shifts his mother experienced when she left Hong Kong and set up a new home in London, while an earlier tape, *XLPI: Myth(s) of Creation*, investigates the various notions of travel, both as movement from city to city and across language and various identities. And, in his first year as director of the L.A. Freewaves Festival, Ma organized a series of brilliantly conceived "video bus tours." [See p. 38.]

For Ma, living and working in Los Angeles is a double-edged sword. "Being in L.A., you're in both the best and the worst of it. You're ignored by the industry, which is a good thing because it translates into a freedom that you wouldn't have otherwise." He also notes the irony of living in the city where most of the world's popular media is produced while barely managing to sustain what has been described as one of cable television's worst public access systems in the country. "If we lived in a culture that valued challenging, progressive media, things would be different. But alas, we don't."

Having learned the hard way about the difficulty of balancing creative work with economic necessity, Ma is also less than hopeful about the idea of tactical appropriation of industrial tools. "I think it's a myth that working in the industry is a good way to get access to equipment and facilities which you can use for your own work during down time. I can count on one hand

the number of people I know who have been able to complete projects that way."

For Ma, a more important set of resources may be found in organizations



such as Visual Communications, an Asian American visual arts organization founded at UCLA in the 1970s, and the Long Beach Museum of Art, whose historic significance is unquestionable, in spite of its uncertain future. With the virtual disappearance of arts funding since the eighties and the demise of local access programs once supported by organizations like LACE, Ming looks hopefully to institutions like L.A.'s Museum of Contemporary Art and Side Street Projects, a nonprofit visual arts program, to step into the void and expand their support for media arts.

According to Ma, the independent film movement has become essentially a "commercial genre" that benefits certain types of production while ignoring others. "'Independent' is a term that I don't even identify with anymore except in terms of being an alternative to the commercial industry—which is ironic, since the independent film movement has its roots in the experimental spirit of the '60s and '70s which has now been essentially shut out." Nonetheless, Ma remains hopeful about the future for alternative media practice. "There has always been a very vibrant, strong, innovative media arts community here. Going back to people like Kenneth Anger and Maya Deren, you can see independent or experimental work as a kind of flip side to the industry. There is a tradition here, even if people don't know about it."

Steve Anderson is a filmmaker and freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

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A FIRESIDE CHAT with EZTV'S Michael Masucci

FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS, EZTV HAS BEEN ONE OF L.A.'S MOST IMPORTANT and prolific alternative production and exhibition venues. Since the death of its founder, John Dorr, in 1993, EZTV has been directed by video artist, producer, and curator Michael Masucci. Throughout his career, Masucci has worked to dissolve the boundaries between commercial and noncommercial media and to broaden the reach of EZTV's video and digital production into a truly global arena. In addition to his passionate advocacy for alternative media, Masucci is devoted to keeping EZTV on the cutting edge of rapidly changing technologies, creating one of the world's first exhibition spaces dedicated to computer art (EZTV's CyberSpace Gallery) and maintaining an experimental media presence at high tech events such as the DV Expo and Siggraph conventions. Here, Masucci talks about Los Angeles, new technologies, and the future of alternative media.

On EZTV:

What EZTV is about is developing media that doesn't have the bureaucracy of the studio system. We're about not having to go through huge chains of command to get projects created. For 20 years, EZTV has been saying that you can go out with whatever tools you have available and create your project. However, in recent years we've been focusing on getting projects into bigger arenas. We've had things premiere in places like PBS, Bravo, and the BBC. But there's still very much a need for the kind of grassroots thinking that EZTV has stood for all these years.

On Los Angeles:

Up to now, we might as well have been located in Cleveland for all the good our proximity to Hollywood has done us. We have never benefited directly from being located in Los Angeles. In fact, the studios probably wish we had gone away a long time ago and the independent film movement had not become as popular as it has. But now the tables have turned, and there are a lot of advantages to being independent. In the future, I think the independent voice will be focused on even more.

On independent film:

The effect of the independent film movement and particularly *The Blair Witch Project* has been that major studios are talking to us—not only about the things we're producing now, but they're interested in distributing old stuff. All of a sudden, the studios understand what we're doing and they're very excited about it. I haven't had to explain what it is we're about, because what they see are low production costs and high potential for profit. We're saying the same things that we've been saying all along, but the difference is now they're listening to us.

On digital video:

Digital video is part of an evolution in media which comes from the video art movement of the '70s, experimental film, and a lot of other alternative media that seem to have fallen by the wayside when you hear about the digital video "revolution." People think low cost, high quality production began with digital video, but the reality is that people at EZTV and a handful of other places, like the Electronic Cafe and the Long Beach Museum, have been doing for decades what digital video users are taking to be a revolution. Historically, it just isn't true.

On history and the future:

Another goal for us is to provide a historical context for what's happening in technology now. For me, the musician/inventor Les Paul is one of the true parents of this field because his invention of multi-track recording laid the foundation for all kinds of compositing—whether it's layering in Photoshop or nonlinear editing—which we now take as a given. But this was actually a philosophical invention. Prior to multi-track recording, everything was live. If you couldn't do it all in one room at one time and capture it with one machine, it didn't exist.

In the 20th century we've seen a whole new chapter of thinking—to me as important and as revolutionary as the invention of perspective in the 14th century. The 21st century is not going to be about film. The aesthetics are from film and the language is from film, but the actual tools are electronic. It's the logical extension not of celluloid but of radio—sending electronic signals out through space—and that's really what the Internet is.

—STEVE ANDERSON

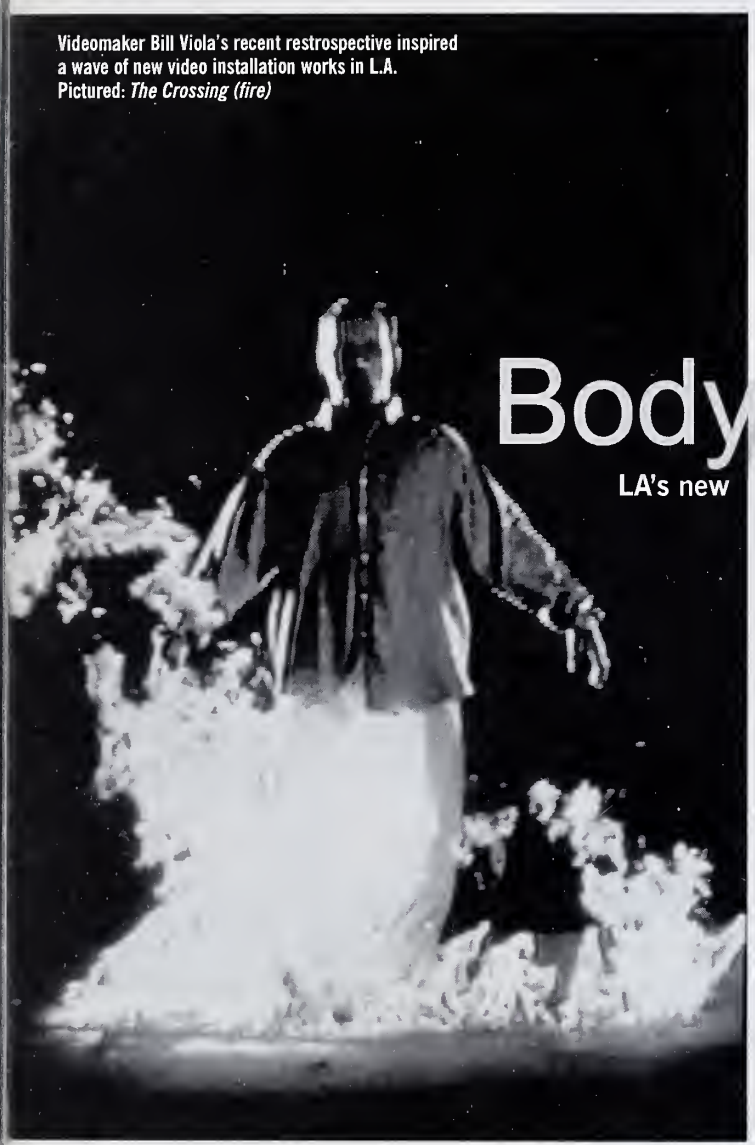
Body Conscious

LA's new media scene revels in the sensations of the flesh.

BY HOLLY WILLIS

WHILE L.A. IS GENERALLY KNOWN AS THE HOME OF Hollywood filmmaking, and sometimes as the birthplace of a particularly provocative strand of the avant-garde, it should also be acknowledged as the site for an increasingly compelling body of work centered on installation. This contingent of the LA media scene effectively illustrates a widespread interest in—you guessed it—the body, which is no surprise given that this is, after all, LA, where a particular kind of body takes you a long way. But rather than depicting that body, these artists are interested in the ways in which viewers relate to images through their own bodies.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of this new body awareness is the explosion of film and video events across the city over the last year or so, all of them geared in some way toward immersing viewers (and their suntanned, aerobicized physiques) within the image in large-scale video projections and installations. Somewhat reminiscent of Stan van der Beek's notion of the "expanded cinema" and the ecstatic light shows of California in the 1960s, when artists explored multiple levels of projection and ways of expanding consciousness beyond the confines of both the physical self and the rational mind, these events reintroduce questions of reception and perception, and the role of corporeal sensation.



Videomaker Bill Viola's recent restrospective inspired a wave of new video installation works in L.A. Pictured: *The Crossing (fire)*

PHOTO: KIRA PEROV, COURTESY BOHEN FOUNDATION

Take Bill Viola's video installations, showcased by a national restrospective last year, for example. The Long Beach-based Viola brings viewers into the very mechanism of vision with several of his most interesting projects. Entering the space of *Slowly Turning Narrative* (1992), which features several video projections completely filling a large room with a huge turning screen/mirror in the center, is like walking into the body of a camera (or that of an eye)—the viewer becomes part of the mechanism of projection itself.

Similarly, Viola's *Hall of Whispers* (1995) invites viewers into a darkened hallway within which are suspended black-and-white video images of faces. Eyes closed, mouths gagged, voices muffled—the life-size images suggest the issue of censorship on one level, but the hallway itself and the experience of standing among these ghostly faces exemplify Viola's on-going interest in the relationship of viewers to images suspended in space and time. "It has always been my contention that video images in some sense live," explains Viola, and we can extend his thought to note that our interactions with images involve an intricate play between body, mind, and being.

Video artists Bruce and Norman Yonemoto are also known for their media installations which play with the body's relationship to images. The eloquent *Framed* (1989), for example, borrows footage shot by the War Relocation Authority (which handled the incarceration of Americans of Japanese ancestry during WWII) and reframes it, looking for suggestions of alternate readings. However, the viewer experiences this reframing by looking through a series of screens and scrims such that one frequently sees not only multiple layers of images, but one's own reflection. In this way, the project deftly plays with the relationship between viewer and viewed.

Norman Yonemoto recently addressed this interaction directly in an installation titled *'Self' Portrait* (1999), which positions the viewer within a small office cubicle, seated in a wheelchair watching a computer monitor. The images on the monitor trace an excursion onto the Internet, intercut with images of Yonemoto undergoing medical treatment. Once again, however, the viewer catches glimpses of him- or herself in the monitor, and thus becomes implicated directly in the image being watched. The project, since it addresses issues of subjectivity and the body, both as an entity needing medical treatment and as an imagined or constructed entity traversing the Internet, beautifully evokes the shift between self and other as the image toggles back and forth from reflection to projection.

Jennifer Steinkamp's large scale, brightly hued, multi-projector animated installations take this interest in the body's relationship to images in another direction altogether. By merging the corporeal with the visual, she reworks our perception of comprehensible space. "Basically, I use light to dematerialize architecture," she explains. "I do this by placing an illusionistic space inside of a real space."

Steinkamp produces her animations digitally, and then projects them in large rooms, filling entire walls, floors, and ceilings with mov-





ing, sometimes layered imagery. The effect is stunning, akin to stepping into an image that has depth, or being wrapped up in layers of moving pixels. "As the viewer internalizes the image in her mind, she also experiences it physically in real space as she sees her shadow," says Steinkamp. The shadows and bodies of viewers become moving elements within the pieces, and the combined layers and movement effectively realign and rearrange the contours of a given space and our sense of subjectivity.

Other L.A. artists emphasize the body as a point of perception by calling attention to the ways in which we actually encounter images. Cindy Bernard, for example, is known for her photographic recreations of Hollywood locations. These projects slyly redouble the power of the film industry by astutely throwing into vertiginous relief the relationship between the real and simulated. *Location Proposal #2* (1997-1999), for example is composed of 18 separate rear screen projections that are reproductions of the Muir Woods locations from Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. The key here is the fact that Hitchcock never visited the Muir Woods, but instead recreated the location on a soundstage. Thus Bernard's recreation (or re-recreation) simulates a simulation, but perhaps more importantly, it invites viewers to perceive this sense of simulation by moving around the images, which are rear-projected on suspended screens. We thus literally enter into a continuous chain of reproductions that ultimately undermines the hierarchy of the real over the fake.

These are only a few names and projects in a much larger movement designed to complicate spectatorship. Indeed, the array of "expanded cinema" projects and artists in L.A. is vast, and might include the various video/music events in clubs that merge dancing with viewing, as well as the attention paid to senses beyond vision and hearing. Vibeke Sorensen's recent installation work, for example, includes the senses of smell and touch, while Sara Roberts and Christine Panushka recently collaborated on a project that asked viewers to find a story by investigating the drawers of a large cabinet. In all of these media installations, viewing expands beyond mere watching, and the recent anxieties over the potential obsolescence of the body as we become a cyber culture are rebuked in a questioning that is at once exuberant, celebratory, and curious.

THE REAL DEAL

Sex, High Tech & Reality TV in the City of Angels

BY KAREN VOSS

THE DOCUMENTARY SCENE

"DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION HERE IS EXPLODing," claims Betsy McLane, executive director of the Los Angeles-based International Documentary Association (IDA). It hasn't always been like this, but with the titanic changes wrought by DV and desktop editing, the proverbial floodgates of reality-based content have burst open. Add the tremendous changes in distribution channels (especially cable and the Internet), and you get a whole new documentary scene. This is perhaps nowhere more pronounced than in L.A.

Just look at the numbers. While theatrically-released feature documentaries have stayed about the same for the last 20 years (about 10 per year make it to theaters and gross around $150K), more and more mainstream resources are being funneled into "reality-based" programming. And a lot of those resources go to L.A. filmmakers.



Mark Harris' Oscar-winning Holocaust documentary *The Long Way Home.*

PHOTO: BETH HATEFUTSOTH, COURTESY SEVENTH ART RELEASING

But that's only one of the reasons for the genre's renewed prominence in the city of angels. L.A. also boasts an institutional infrastructure whose importance shouldn't be underestimated—all of the guilds (powerful entities in L.A.) sanctify documentary filmmaking, allowing it a small place in the sun next to the Hollywood feature. The Writers' Guild has a nonfiction group. The Directors' Guild has a caucus of documentary directors. And the Directors', Editors', and Writers' Guilds all give out special awards for documentary filmmaking.

This institutional infrastructure spills over into a plucky local exhibition scene, which includes screenings held by the IDA, the American Cinematheque, various museums, and film school retrospectives (at USC, UCLA, and AFI).

Yet another reason for L.A.'s strong position in the national doc scene is the fact that many directors and cinematographers here take advantage of their hometown's primary industry and ricochet back and forth between feature and nonfiction work. Haskell Wexler, for example, shot *Richard Pryor Live on the Sunset Strip* and his own docu-fiction hybrid *Medium Cool*, as well as mainstreamers like *Mulholland Falls*. His next doc is on bus drivers' unions. Similarly, Michael Apted capped off his *7 Up* series last year with *42 Up* and simultaneously hit theaters with the new James Bond flick, *The World Is Not Enough*. Even Penelope Spheeris, who gave us *The Decline of Western Civilization* series, has also directed a spate of Hollywood features, including *Wayne's World*. These folks have made a career out of the back-and-forth maneuver.

If you're not a Wexler or an Apted, however, crossover can admittedly be a gray area. Sure, the time has never been riper to rob Peter to pay Paul, figuratively speaking. Reality programming for Fox alone, with brazen cops and attacking animals, enables unprecedented salaries and access to equipment. Shockumentaries, intimate profiles, middlebrow history—television audiences can't get enough. This means that, as a filmmaker, you may have to stomach some pretty low documentary-making on the long road to your dream project.

But overall, this may be the best way to tell the story of documentary filmmaking in L.A.—it's a neo-Robin Hood tale of interloping and rechanneling resources in the after-hours of Hollywood production companies to fuel projects of passion. The following illustrates the complicated, fluctuating scrappiness that's currently transforming the way we define and consume "documentary."



John Reiss' doc *Better Living Through Circuitry* is all the Rave.



Allen & Albert Hughes's foray into documentary filmmaking *American Pimp*

The L.A. Factor

Looking back, L.A. has long been home to some of the most compelling documentary filmmakers, as well as being the subject of their stories. *Wattstax*, Mel Stuart's 1973 study of a massive, daylong concert held at the Los Angeles Coliseum seven years after L.A.'s 1965 Watts uprising, is a key prototype. Coming on the heels of the Warner Bros-funded *Woodstock* (1970), the film intercuts concert footage of top artists (brought to the event by Stax Records, a crucial Black record company in L.A.) with the geography of Black L.A.'s struggling urban core and commentary from significant celebrities like Richard Pryor to create an exquisite piece of cultural history. The performance, as well as the portrait of a subculture and the way white eyes crave images of ethnic others, epitomize much of Wattstax and L.A.'s documentary impulse generally. And the film has been recently recirculated, exhibited by the IDA at the John Anson Ford Cultural Theatre, with live performances by Stax records alumni and the First AME Choir.

Likewise signaling the richness of L.A. documentary and the vitality of contemporary documentary exhibition there is French filmmaker Agnes Varda's *Murs murs* (aka *Murals, Murals*). Varda's loving study of L.A.'s ethnic murals brims with the intoxicating complexity of a French woman's gaze on an under-canonized landscape and the poetry of the early city symphonies. It was made on a big studio's dime in 1980 (she also made *Black Panthers* in 1968) and resurfaced recently at the American Cinematheque, as well as at the "L.A. on Film" retrospective at USC in February.

Other more recent iconic docs include Kirby Dick's *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist* (1997) about performance artist Flanagan's battle with cystic fibrosis and his choice of masochism as an expressive mode. The film charts a circuit of underground practices and locations in a savvy and unsettling permutation of the L.A. imperative to capture and revere performance.

Shotgun Freeway Drives through Lost L.A. (1996), an attempt to map the psychological geography of L.A. via an updated set of "ecologies" (borrowed from British architect Reyner Banham's canonical text on Los Angeles), exemplifies a doc first produced for local television (KCET) that made it into theatrical distribution. The film is a pipeline to local gurus like Mike Davis (*City of Quartz*), as well as being a primer on local industry and architecture. The film also features the quintessential trope of much L.A. documentary, namely the use of the auto and driving sequences to structure truth claims about the city.

Recent L.A. production has, of course, been varied, from Mark Harris' critically acclaimed *The Long Way Home* about the struggles endured by Jews after the Holocaust, to Michelle LeBrun's moving portrait of her dying husband, *Death: A Love Story*, to Alexandra Juhasz's *Women of Vision*, which profiles 18 feminist filmmakers. To bring all of L.A.'s documentary production together within one paradigm is silly—but there are two current trends that stand out.

Technology and Esprit de Corps

While these films suggest certain tropes and strategies, as well as a history that's been generally overlooked, the big story in L.A. is the same as anywhere else: DV. But opinions are split on the format's usefulness. Jessica Yu, who won an Academy Award for her short, *Breathing Lessons: The Life and Work of Mark O'Brien*, and who recently completed *The Living Museum*, about a mental institution in New York, refused to shoot her new doc on DV, primarily because she isn't thrilled with digital projection. Yu, who admits a certain "perverse Luddditeism," is concerned with the imminent decline of theatrically released documentaries shot and projected on film. "Digital projection," she says, "is a completely different aesthetic experience that needs to suit the subject matter."



Oscar winner Jessica Yu falls on one side of the digital debate among documentary directors.

Yu predicts that the initial impact of new technologies sits squarely in the domain of distribution. Documentaries are difficult to see, and while streaming docs over the web is probably much farther away than the current hype suggests, the revolution will happen in the domain of self-distribution, at which point, Yu claims, "Documentary lifespans will go through the roof."

Adopting the opposite position is Jon Reiss, the current poster child for the digital aesthetic. Reiss used a DV camera to shoot *Better Living Through Circuitry*, a documentary capturing the kinetics of underground rave and electronic music culture,

and says this film could only happen because of advances in digital cameras, which allowed the filmmaker to shoot in particularly unobtrusive ways in hidden milieus.

Reiss, who has made several award-winning music videos and a narrative feature, was won over by the DV format. "If you've ever considered making a documentary," Reiss asserts, "the time is now. There's so little money involved in it—you can buy a camera for around $1,500 bucks. Then you can go out and shoot." Noting that the technology has changed dramatically even since *Better Living*, Reiss cites Firewire and the elimination of expensive beta transfers. "You get Final Cut Pro and an iMac and you're set," Reiss enthuses.

Joining Yu, Reiss feels the most imminent funkiness of the transitional period revolves around documentary distribution. Audiences may never be willing to download a 90-minute documentary, but they'll certainly look for them on the web and maybe, Reiss theorizes, we'll see a renaissance of the short format documentary. Indeed, several L.A. filmmakers share that vision. L.A.-based writer Shari Roman, working in collaboration with Sophie Fiennes, packed a DV camera and hopped on a plane for Copenhagen to make the well-received portrait of Lars von Trier titled *Lars From 1-10*, while Ellen Dux and Brian Neale are currently finishing work on a DV profile of sci-fi guru William Gibson (which, again, uses the streets of L.A. and the backseat of a car as its set and location).

Let's Talk About Sex

While the Internet offers a new distribution outlet and short docs may have a shot at renewed attention, documentaries still share the stigma of being, as Reiss puts it, "unsexy." To counter that impression, several L.A. filmmakers have made sex the topic of their docs. Albert and Allen Hughes, known for their narrative features *Menace II Society* and *Dead Presidents*, two years ago made *American Pimp*, a documentary examining the lives and philosophies of working and retired pimps across the country. Framed by archival footage, blaxploitation clips, and an intoxicating music soundtrack, urban pimps hold forth about the details of their enterprise, and in the process, offer a scathing critique of the American way, while indirectly suggesting parallels between—surprise!—prostitution and the Hollywood film industry.

Although *American Pimp* may offer a source of inspiration for feature filmmakers who are considering forays into documentary, it is also a reminder of the difference between narrative and documentary when it comes to capturing audience share. Even with their combination of name recognition, record industry financing, and rave reviews at Sundance, it took two years for the Hughes to secure theatrical distribution from Seventh Art Releasing.

Another L.A. filmmaker who has built a career on often salacious documentary content is U.K. native Nick Broomfield, whose first-person investigations have included subjects such as legalized prostitution in Las Vegas; Aileen Wournos, the first lesbian serial killer; "Hollywood Madame" Heidi Fleiss; and the underground S/M fetish club scene in New York. Broomfield, who has been one of L.A.'s most prolific and provocative filmmakers, takes a rather dim view of the kind of documentary production that the city most actively supports. "To put it in a disparaging way, I'm fascinated and pleased that people love documentary, but it's down-market documentary. It's below street level. It's in the sewers," he says.

For Broomfield, Los Angeles has become a center for "numbskull programming," in the form of reality TV. However, he also admits that "there's more of a network here and more money. L.A. is only about making films, so there's money for production, but a specific kind of production. And right now, it's all oriented toward exploitation."

Although Broomfield himself is known for films that take on difficult, sometimes taboo subjects, he has begun to view the focus on sensational subject matter as a double-edged sword. "If you want to make films about S/M parlors and Kurt Cobain, you can do that until the cows come home, but if you want to do something that's less immediate and emotional, something that's insightful and might require a bit more thought on the part of the audience, or something with political content or historical relevance, it's harder now than ever to do it."

"L.A. is only about making films, so there's money for production, but a specific kind of production. And right now, it's all oriented toward exploitation."
—Documentarian Nick Broomfield

Broomfield is currently working on a feature with financing from Film Four in Britain and is also doing a reality-based comedy show for Comedy Central. For hope in the world of documentary, he turns not to Fox, but to the old school, particularly Frederick Wiseman, who has single-handedly kept alive the tradition of cinema verité. "Frederick Wiseman is the person I most admire in the world," he says. "It's almost impossible to make the kind of films he makes. It's a miracle he's still making them." Broomfield continues, "I'm not somebody who's a conventional journalist by any means, but I think it's a real tragedy that the old school has been thrown out so completely. The multiplicity of media right now provides less information than we've ever had."

So clearly opinion in L.A. is split regarding the influence of new financing and distribution resources, and the prospects offered by digital video. But one thing is definitely clear—people are making more nonfiction movies than ever before.

Karen Voss is a doctoral candidate at USC's School of Cinema-TV, a freelance writer and general enthusiast of the independent ethos.



From Gregory Nava's groundbreaking *El Norte*

GeNeRaTIoN ñ

QUE PASA WITH L.A.'S SECOND LARGEST POPULATION GROUP

BY THOMAS WHITE

OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS, LATINO MEDIAMAKERS HAVE HAD to do it themselves. Whether mainstream or alternative, they've strived to counter Hollywood-perpetuated stereotypes of Latinos as maids, gardeners, and drug dealers. Breakthrough films like Gregory Nava's *El Norte* (1983), Luis Valdez' *La Bamba* (1987), Ramon Menendez' *Stand and Deliver* (1988), Edward James Olmos' *American Me* (1992), and Nava's *Mi Familia* (1995) reflect not only a different side of Los Angeles than Hollywood could ever muster, but also show the world a truer rendering of the Latino experience while demonstrating its diversity. These films have also paved the way for a new generation of Latino filmmakers, who have taken the politicized agenda of their forebearers in diverse and interesting directions.

The Latino filmmaking community had its roots in the turbulent 1960s, when such young activists as Moctezuma Esparaza, Jesus Trevino, and Silvio Morales organized a series of high school walkouts in 1968 in East L.A. Two years later, as film students at UCLA, they borrowed cameras to document the August 1970 Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War, one of the biggest peace demonstrations in Southern California. "It was political events like that which shaped the first generation of filmmakers," says Chon Noriega, associate professor at the UCLA School of Film, Theater, and Television. "What I find interesting interviewing filmmakers from that period is seeing their work. They were doing innovative stuff because they didn't know any better; they didn't know the rules. They were making up a lot of things that in hindsight were really quite pioneering, particularly in terms of social documentary or public affairs films. Aesthetically that was the first wave of mixing of social movement activity and ignorance of the conventions of mass media."

Public television played a major role in nurturing the early generation of Latino filmmakers. *El Norte*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Zoot Suit*, and others were all produced by PBS's now defunct *American Playhouse*. Although PBS continues to showcase Latino media on such programs as *P.O.V.*, *Independent Lens*, and through local stations, public television's impact is perhaps not as great today, due to the decline in public funding and the emergence of other media.

With public broadcasting's diminished role as a major resource and outlet, the current generation of Latino filmmakers—Lalo Lopez, Jose Luis Valenzula, and Miguel Arteta among them—have, like their predecessors, forged their own paths. Their aesthetic strategies reflect a sense of making-do without Hollywood and creating their own distinctive visions of what filmmaking can and ought to be.

Lalo Lopez came to filmmaking from agitprop comedy theater and cartooning, and his media work with his company Pocho Productions reflects both sensibilities. Lopez and his partner, video artist Esteban Zul, have taken a grassroots approach to exhibition, marketing their work on their website [www.pocho.com], through their 800 number, and on tour to schools in Southern California. Lopez and his contemporaries have been turning their estrangement from the industry into an asset. "All my friends are doing music videos for all these new Chicano bands," he says. "It's a necessity; no big record company will pay for someone they don't know, so our community gets to make those videos. We're so shut out of the industry, we just had to do it. It's self-contained."

Jose Luis Valenzuela also comes from a theater background. His latest film, *Luminarias*, will get a limited release through KitParker/New Latin Pictures commencing May 5 in L.A., and will be distributed internationally by Alex Mendoza and Associates. The film was originally produced as a play, written by Valenzuela's wife, Evelina Fernandez. Rather than seek out producers to finance their film, Valenzuela and Fernandez went directly to Latino professionals in their community. "It was a great experience," he reflects. "It was an attempt to talk to our friends who aren't in filmmaking [and tell them] that this is really the way we should go as a community . . . telling a story the way *we* want and learning a language for Latino filmmaking. It should be our own. It was a different way of thinking about how to make a film; we were all participants, like a grassroots co-op."

Luminarias is a romantic comedy about four professional Latina women looking for love in multicultural Los Angeles. A sort of Latina *Waiting to Exhale*, the film mines new territory beyond the well-trod-

den, gang-ridden turf of *American Me* and *Blood In, Blood Out*. "One of the reasons we're filmmakers," says Valenzuela, "is we're tired of the gang issue and of the poor [being explored in films]. We're looking at other social levels. The women in *Luminarias*—one falls in love with a Korean, one falls in love with a Jewish guy, one falls in love with a Mexican—this is what the city is all about. So it's more about the idea that our community is broader, bigger, and more visionary, and it's never been portrayed that way."

Miguel Arteta is another rising Latino director, who first penetrated industry awareness with *Star Maps*, a darkly tragicomic look at Latino culture in Los Angeles. Arteta is not a Los Angeles native; rather, he prides himself on being a lifelong foreigner. He was born in Puerto Rico, of Peruvian and Spanish parents, and lived in Costa Rica and Spain before eventually moving to the United States. "I think that being a foreigner has a little to do with [my becoming a filmmaker]" he notes. "I've been looking at all these communities from outside, and having an outsider's perspective is good thing for a filmmaker."

This outsider's perspective allows for extra-cultural exploration. Arteta's latest work, Sundance favorite *Chuck and Buck*, is not intrinsically Latino in theme; it examines the intricacies and ambiguities of friendships that thrive in the innocence of childhood and die in the harsh commerce of adulthood. "It's much more of a character study," Arteta says of the film. "I'm interested in branching out and being able to tell any kind of story. I think one of the good things that a community can do is not to forget to tell your own stories but also to be able to tell any kind of story that just happens to have Latinos in it. I'm trying to do both—I'm trying to represent different kinds of voices from the Latino community and also just simply have movies that are out there, that have a lot of Latino talent involved . . . I think that Latino filmmakers are starting to say, 'Let's just do work.' And that's very good for the community, as well."



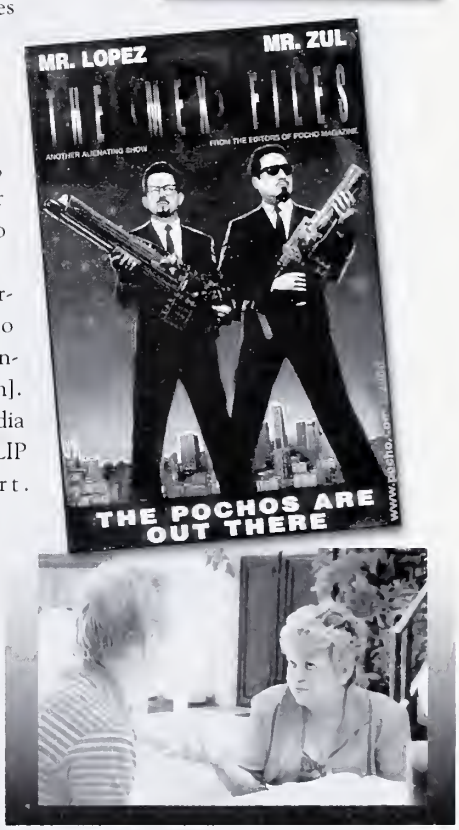
Cheech Marin in *Luminarias*

The generation of Latino mediamakers that came out of the Chicano movement has achieved a fair share of success in the industry: Gregory Nava has a 10-picture deal with New Line Cinema; Jesus Trevino is producing and directing the cable series *Resurrection Boulevard* for Showtime; Edward James Olmos is not only acting and producing, but also chairs the National Latino Broadcasting Project; and Moctezuma Esparza produces films for both cable television and theatrical release (*Selena*).

And now the old guard is reaching out to the young turks: Lalo Lopez and Esteban Zul caught Nava's attention, and he hired them to write a comedy for New Line. "When Greg got the opportunity to start mining whatever's out there creatively," says Lopez, "he came to us... despite whatever political stuff we've been doing. Greg and Moctezuma are going out and looking, seeking what's there. People like us have been toiling away in our own community because, one, that's what we love doing, and two, nobody else would have us anyway." He adds, "They're running out of stuff; that's why they're coming to us."

The intergenerational dynamic is both nurturing and mildly contentious. The politically charged work of the 1970s has largely, and perhaps naturally, evolved into something more commercial among the older generation, while for their younger counterparts, sentiments are oriented as much to independent and experimental work as they are to the industry. "You've always had people who've wanted to work through Hollywood," Chon Noriega maintains, "but they want to present things that Hollywood is not dealing with. What those people have wanted to say has changed from those who were tied to the civil rights movement to those who really identified more as Generation X or slackers. There's an underlying set of concerns and principles they share, but the aesthetics and rhetoric are very different."

Nava's company, El Norte Productions, has been a vital resource for the younger generation of filmmakers. Susana Zepeda, the company's vice president in charge of film development, recalls, "When I first met with Greg, he said, 'I don't want people to be reinventing the wheel; I don't want people to have to go through that again. I want to build a company where we can give opportunities to other Latinos and other people of color just to tell their stories under our banner.' "



Defenders of the free world: Pocho Productions' Lopez and Zul market themselves in *The Mex Files* poster.

Making progress: Miguel Arteta's *Chuck & Buck* uses colorblind casting, using Latina actors like Lupe Ontiveros in non-ethnic roles.

And while companies like El Norte Productions are working to close the generation gap, Los Angeles abounds with other groups that keep the Latino community thriving. *Latin Heat*, a publication headed by former actress Bel Hernandez, has been a vital resource for mediamakers in helping to make connections and forge ties; Hernandez also spearheads the annual Latino Entertainment Industry Conference [www.latinheat.com]. On a grassroots level, media organizations such as NALIP [CAC@intermediaArt.org], Independent Feature Project/West, and the Sundance Institute have played important roles in reaching out to local talent, as has the local theater community, including Plaza de la Raza and the Latino Theater Initiative Program at the Mark Taper Forum.

"I would encourage filmmakers from all communities to tune in and get your Chicano passport stamped, because it's an incredibly talented community," Arteta asserts. "We all have to encourage young Latino filmmakers to pick up a digital camera and tell a story. There are no excuses anymore. They need to look to themselves, not to Hollywood. The best way to get power is within, with your own lives and your own observations."

Thomas White is associate editor of International Documentary.

PHOTO ABOVE: CAROL PETERSEN; ALL PHOTOS COURTESY FILMMAKERS

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

How L.A. Freewaves & Visual Communications do the things they do.

BY JIM MORAN

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS (VC) AND L.A. Freewaves (LAF), two of L.A.'s oldest media arts organizations, have recently joined forces to create Open Studio/L.A., a series of free workshops on web design targeted to visual artists, writers, and musicians. These two stalwarts of alternative media art are linking arms with OnRamp@sunset, a neighborhood computer access center in Echo Park. And this collaboration shouldn't be underestimated. In an era when public funding of the arts has disgracefully diminished to record-level lows, and in a city where industrial strategies and profit motivations threaten to monopolize all media production, the odds against avant-garde media thriving in the shadow of the Hollywood sign would seem impossibly steep. But both of these media arts organizations have managed to stay afloat, mainly by being attentive to the ever-shifting needs of their constituents, maintaining an adventurous outlook, and working collaboratively with other organizations.

L.A. Freewaves: Finding Faultlines and Connections in the LA Sprawl

Celebrating its 10th anniversary last year, L.A. Freewaves is an ever-growing agglomeration of people and places, all dedicated to fostering alternative media. While the organization is physically based in the cramped living room of founder Anne Bray (with spillover in festival director Ming Ma's Silverlake home, zealously guarded by a voraciously affectionate German Shepherd pup named Lupe), it nevertheless manages to spread throughout the city with impressive fervor during each biannual festival.



Above & right: some digital art projects from Open Studio, a collaboration among old and new media groups.

Undaunted by the region's sprawl and by its lack of obvious centers, Bray and Ma have exploited and celebrated Southern California's dispersal of resources as a strength rather than a disadvantage. Each festival infiltrates the entire city, with venues scattered through all communities. And that's appropriate—after all, a significant connotation of the organization's name puns on the "freeways" that have accelerated L.A.'s transient nature since the rise of the automobile; like them, Freewaves attempts to link the city's neighborhoods with on ramps and intersections.

Indeed, "All Over the Map," the sixth and most recent edition, held in the fall of 1998, was an apropos appellation for the series of events spread out like Los Angeles itself, decentered and shifting on the fault lines of a hundred flowering subcultures. One of the festival's highlights was a series of video bus tours, during which festival curators led viewers throughout the city, showcasing particular places that resonated with the videos screened on board. Weird? Sure, but also strangely perfect, especially for L.A. Imagine curator Ma standing at the front of a nicely appointed and air-conditioned bus riffing on voyeurism and video, while just outside, hookers and transvestites strut up and down Santa Monica Boulevard. Later, as the viewers step out of the bus, Ma points out a surveillance camera, and they shift from being the comfortable voyeurs to being the objects of the camera's gaze.

Another year's festival was staged in a series of artist-designed living rooms at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Like the bus tours, this wacky framing device reminded viewers about the very process of viewing, as well as the dynamics of public and private. And that's what LAF does so well—make people experience the process of viewing in a way that makes us think.

Part of all this attention to the hows and whys comes from Bray herself. She always thinks long and hard about video and what it can and can't do. This year, LAF's 7th Celebration of Experimental Media will be held in November 2000, and as always, it will be curated by a group of video artists and enthusiasts, and will most probably feature yet another inventive screening idea destined to make us reconsider how we watch what we watch.

Visual Communications: From Asia to Chili

Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, Visual Communications is the premier Asian Pacific media arts center in the U.S. Like LAF, VC services the entire alternative media community in Los Angeles, but its particular mission is to promote intercultural understanding by producing, presenting, and preserving honest and sensitive stories about Asian Pacific people.

Also like LAF, the centerpiece of its year-round programming is a festival. Beginning in 1983 and presented each May (18-25, 2000), the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film and Video Festival is both intense in terms of the sheer number of projects screened and incredibly celebratory—the vibe is always one of enthusiasm and excitement as viewers check out the array of international projects, as well as new work by Asian-American makers. VC director Linda Mabalot, a lively and energetic promoter of Asian Pacific media, invariably speaks with impassioned fervor about the festival's highlights, while the festival's various participants juggle an incredibly eclectic slate of projects.

In addition to its festival and various panels and screenings throughout the year, VC hosts one of the nation's most comprehensive collec-

tions of images of Asian Pacific American life. Its traveling exhibit, "Heading East," chronicles American notions of freedom, democracy, and economic opportunity within the oral histories and photographs of the Asian Pacific settlers. Equally revisionist, VC's "Speak Out for Justice" video collection recounts the Los Angeles Commission Hearings on the war relocation of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II. VC also published a book in 1991, *Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts*, a much-needed attempt to address forgotten histories as well as tactical maneuvers for getting work out to audiences.

And if all of this isn't enough, VC is also famous for its annual "ChiliVisions" event,



during which eight Asian Pacific American community organizations compete for the Best Chili in Los Angeles award. Not only is the food damn good, but people throughout Los Angeles seem to relish the event's strange amalgamation of pleasures and its refusal of a narrowly defined cultural logic.

With Open Studio/L.A., LAF conducts Internet training workshops at sites throughout Los Angeles, while VC provides artists with a free web site and email account. By assisting mediamakers in overcoming the technical hurdles and discovering the creative and professional benefits of the Internet, both organizations prove yet again to have the innovative and visionary methods necessary to meet the evolving needs of the media artists they serve. Perhaps more significantly, this successful partnership offers a model for other organizations struggling to survive by their own individual efforts.

For more information, check out the L.A. Freewaves website at www.freewaves.org and Visual Communications at www.vconline.org

Jim Moran is a teacher and writer based in Los Angeles.

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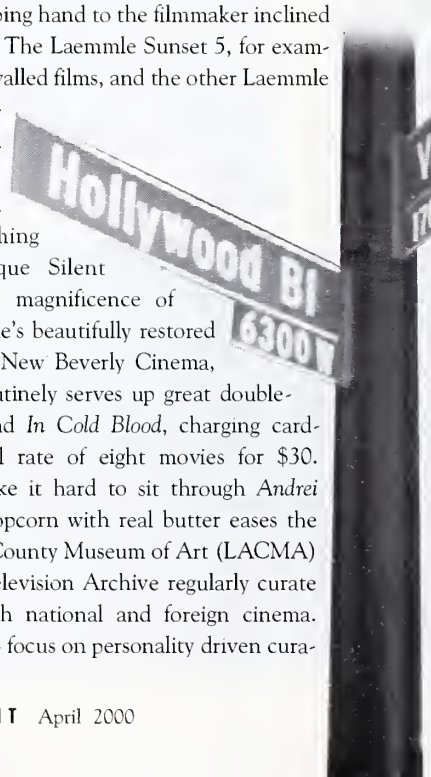
BY KATE HAUG

A film lover's guide to L.A.'s arthouses & alternative venues



LOS ANGELES CLAIMS TO BE THE FILM CAPITOL of the world, but is it really a film town? True, the movie business pervades the city like Dolby surround sound—head shots are displayed in businesses from hot dog stands to hair salons; there's a constant din of industry talk; every social function has its paralyzing game of six degrees of separation; and seemingly 'familiar' faces are around every corner. But the true test lies in its cinemas. What films can one see in L.A.? You'd expect to find every kind. And one does—but like everything else in Los Angeles, they're spread out. But if you search among the low-lying strip malls and sprawling multiplexes, along streets lined with palm trees, billboards, and parking lots, you'll find a plethora of arthouses, revival theaters, academic film centers, and alternative screens.

If you browse the Art/Foreign section of moviefone.com or peruse the *L.A. Weekly*, you're likely to find Landmark and Laemmle Theaters on the bill. Current specialized releases like *All About My Mother*, *Holy Smoke*, and *Boys Don't Cry* are usually found at these local arthouses, which, despite a sharp decline in the overall distribution of international releases, remain staunchly devoted to more adventurous and foreign fare. Indeed, the Laemmles, a native Angelino family, are stalwart supporters of independent cinema and are known to lend a helping hand to the filmmaker inclined toward self-distribution. The Laemmle Sunset 5, for example, often exhibits four-walled films, and the other Laemmle theaters host local festival screenings and unusual events.



Los Angeles' revival houses include everything from the totally unique Silent Movie Theater to the magnificence of American Cinematheque's beautifully restored Egyptian Theater. The New Beverly Cinema, one of my favorites, routinely serves up great double-hitters like *Badlands* and *In Cold Blood*, charging cardholders the economical rate of eight movies for $30. Lumpy seats might make it hard to sit through *Andrei Rublev*, but the fresh popcorn with real butter eases the pain. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and UCLA Film and Television Archive regularly curate retrospectives from both national and foreign cinema. While LACMA tends to focus on personality driven curatorial themes such as the recent Humphrey Bogart series, UCLA embraces a bigger, less star-driven cinematic world. Recent UCLA programs have included New Iranian cinema, musicals from around the world, and a Claude Chabrol retrospective.

If you want to revel in the grandeur of old Hollywood, there are the classic venues. In the midst of the Mickey Mouse Co. revival of Hollywood, you can visit the Mann's Chinese or the El Capitan, both located on the newly spruced up Hollywood Boulevard. While the El Capitan is a plush, Disney operation, Mann's Chinese exploits tinsel town's kitschy roots. No one can deny the simple pleasure of pushing your feet into the footprints of Babylon's ne'er-do-wells, and imagining the Hollywood of a bygone era.

In the summer, the Los Angeles Conservancy hosts The Last Remaining Seats, an annual series of celluloid classics. The Conservancy, primarily dedicated to architecture, sets the program in beautiful, aesthetically inspired downtown theaters. After the fall of the grand movie palace, unique places like the Cinerama Dome burst onto the scene. The great Sunset Boulevard dome—sadly, the last one in the world—was designed for Cinerama films. Built in 1963, the Cinerama Dome boasts a 'wrap around' screen which is second in size only to New York City's flat Radio City Music Hall theater.

If you want to see some more adventurous feature fare, there are several alternative venues. Similar to New York City, people are screening films everywhere—from bookstores to nightclubs to living rooms. The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition

and Beyond and The Santa Monica Film Festival and Moxie! Awards are two on-going series dedicated to introducing new work to potential distributors (both are open to submissions). They tend to promote new, low-budget features or other work with commercial potential. The Alternative Screen is hosted by the American Cinematheque at the landmark, 616-seat Egyptian Theater and was founded in 1995 by Margot Gerber and Thomas Harris. Gerber explains that Alternative Screen was founded before the recent growth in L.A.'s festival scene. "We would hear about films on the festival circuit," she says, "and nobody would get a chance to see them in Los Angeles unless you were a member of the industry. It was our goal to provide local audiences with the opportunity to see great films that debuted at festivals around the world." Recent screenings have included *Temporary Girl* by Lisa Kotin; *Wadd, The Life and Times of John C. Holmes*, by Cass Paley; *Afraid of Everything*, by David Barker; *24 Girls*, by Eva Brzeski; and *Sleep* by Peter Calvin.

The Santa Monica Film Festival and Moxie! Awards make up a year-round screening series that culminates in an awards event. In addition to work selected from the monthly screenings, 45 national and foreign titles premiere at the Moxie! Awards. Albert De Quay, who founded the festival in 1997, has a distinct mission for his organization: "We're trying literally to create not only a film festival but an educational institution and year-round support for independent filmmakers."

If you seek experimental film, there are three venues committed to avant-garde traditions. On the West side, there is Documental, curated by Gerry Fialka and presented at Santa Monica's Midnight Special Bookstore. In Hollywood, Filmforum runs weekly screenings at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), and on the East side, Flicker Los Angeles runs a program at Spaceland, a nightclub in Silverlake.

Documental, as the name suggests, is dedicated to films that merge documentary and experimental traditions. Says Fialka, a Marshall Mc Luhan enthusiast, "My strategy is to show things where filmmakers are present and that will shake people out of their somnambulist state. My strategy is to needle the somnambulist. The reason why I show experimental film is that no one has ever learned how to watch them." He sees his events as a place where "the community can participate in a discussion of our culture and our politics." Thus hosting the screenings at Midnight Special, L.A.'s leading political book store, makes perfect sense. Past screenings have included Johan Grimonprez's *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y*, Brian Springer's *Spin*, Morgan Fisher's *Standard Gauge*, and Amy Halpern's *Falling Lessons*. Fialka also runs PXL This, a festival dedicated to the Fisher-Price PXL 2000, that ever-alluring kid's cam.

Founded in 1975, Filmforum is Los Angeles' oldest independent venue. Filmforum primarily curates shows of established media artists. Recently there has been a strong line-up of retrospectives featuring Southern California media artists like James Benning, Betzy Bromberg, and Erika Suderburg. Filmforum frequently works with similarly minded institutions like CalArts and the Goethe Institute to present programs of national and international avant-garde work. Director Mark Rance comments, "The artists we show are people who really investigate the language of cinema, video, digital media and improve upon that vocabulary. I don't want to program low-budget features unless I find the subject matter or the aesthetic challenging."

Flicker director Norwood Cheek describes Flicker Los Angeles as a "more informal, in-your-parents'-basement atmosphere." Holding six shows per year, Flicker gives out rolls of Super 8 film and $100 Flicker grants to local filmmakers to, as the program notes say, "keep their filmic juices flowing." Flicker, which also hosts screenings in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia, concentrates on exhibiting Super 8 and 16mm films, and for Cheek, Flicker is an inspirational event. "Some of my most favorite Flicker highlights are the out of focus, poorly lit films that just don't quite work. It makes filmmaking accessible. The person watching who has been intimidated or shy now may think, 'I can do that. I can even do it in focus.' "



There are still other screening events scattered throughout the city, from the recently established Doboy's Dozens and Hollywood Shorts (both monthly series for shorts) to screenings at Beyond Baroque, L.A.'s adventurous literary arts center which in the past has shown everything from gems made by Joseph Cornell to those of Oscar Micheaux. So if you come to Los Angeles looking for a one-of-a-kind movie experience, there is definitely a place for you.

SCREEN SAVERS

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Festival Fever

BY KATE HAUG

LOS ANGELES IS TEEMING WITH FESTIVALS, BOTH new and old, each tied to a distinct agenda and defining mission. But despite the wide array of topics, genres, and formats, these festivals all share a familiar refrain—each wants to offer filmmakers much needed exposure to the commercial film industry. As a wise old realtor once said, "Location, location, location," and for many filmmakers and festival organizers, that sums up the advantage to festival screenings in L.A.

kd lang (center) & friends at an OUTFEST Opening Night Gala



AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival

(Late October 2000)

2021 N. Western Ave., L.A., CA 90027; (323) 856-7707; afifest@afionline.org; www.afifest.com

The American Film Institute's Los Angeles International Film Festival also has a long-established presence. In 1987, AFI took over Filmex, a well-known event hosted at the ABC mall in Century City. In its present incarnation, the strength of the AFI Fest lies in its premieres of international films. "We had the U.S. premiere of *Life Is Beautiful*," says festival director Jon Fitzgerald, who joined the AFI three years ago after co-founding and co-directing Slamdance. "From the 1999 program, we had three films that I think have a shot at the Best Foreign Language Oscar—*Mifune*, *All About My Mother*, and *Not of This World*." The festival boasts five categories, including a showcase of American independent features and documentaries. Last year, the AFI took advantage of the recently revamped section of Hollywood and borrowed several of the city's prime venues for screenings, including the gorgeous new Egyptian Theater, the El Capitan, and the Vogue, all nestled close by on Hollywood Boulevard.

Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival

(May 18-25, 2000)

c/o Visual Communications, 120 Judge John Aiso St., L.A., CA 90012; (213) 680-4462 ext. 68; http://viscom.apanet.org/filmfest/index.html

The Asian Pacific Film Festival was started in the early 1980s and had ties with UCLA. Visual Communications, the nonprofit organization that sponsors the festival, was a product of UCLA's ground-breaking Ethnocommunications Program. Presented every May in conjunction with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the festival combines work by internationally known Asian filmmakers with that of Asian American directors like Gregg Araki, Philip Kan Gotanda, Ang Lee, Rico Martinez, Mina Shum, and Tran Trang.

DOCtober: International Documentary Film Festival

(October 2000)

International Documentary Association, 1551 South Robertson Boulevard, Ste. 201, LA, CA 90035; (310) 284-8422; ida@artnet.net; www.documentary.org

DOCtober, the International Documentary Association's annual film festival, was founded in 1997 in order to showcase the much neglected documentary genre. The festival selects films they think are outstanding in some way and gives these films a qualifying run, making them eligible for an Academy Award nomination. The last festival screened 14 films over seven days and included *Pop and Me*, by Chris Roe; *Legacy*, by Tod S. Lending; *Gibtown*, by Melissa Shachat; and *American Hollow*, by Rory Kennedy. As its name suggests, DOCtober generally takes place in mid-October. The IDA also hosts DocuFest, a one-day marathon of films competing for IDA Awards.

Hollywood Black Film Festival

(February 24-28, 2000)

1620 Centinela Ave., Ste. 204, Inglewood, CA 90302; (310) 348-3942; info@hbff.org; www.hbff.org

Festival founder and director Tanya Kersey-Henley is building the Hollywood Black Film Festival into what she hopes will become a "Black Sundance." Kersey-Henley wants her festival to be known "as a place where Black filmmakers bring their works to be acquired by the industry and to make deals for future projects." Having just completed its second year, the festival was Kersey-Henley's response to a need: "There has never been a Black film festival in Hollywood for Black filmmakers." This year's programming includes 10 features, 27 shorts, five student films, and six documentaries. Kersey-Henley programs work that does not have major theatrical release and concentrates on showing a diverse look at Black life in America, including "slice of life, romantic tales, things for children, and family oriented programs."

Los Angeles Independent Film Festival

(April 13-18, 2000)

5455 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste. 1500, LA, CA 90036; (323) 937-9155; info@laiff.com; www.laiff.com

Founded in 1995, the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF) concentrates on American independent features, and over the last five years, has grown to six screens and an audience of over 30,000. Programming director Thomas Ethan Harris proudly states that the festival is ranked number five in the world for launching new talent by Chris Gore in his *The Ultimate Film Festival Guide*. "My main goal is to bring a new slate of American independent filmmakers to the forefront," Thomas states. "That goes for both feature and short filmmak-

COURTESY OUTFEST, DOROTHY LUCE

ers. I really want this next generation." Harris says the LAIFF gives a lot of hands-on attention to festival participants. "We tend to connect our filmmakers, linking them to producer's reps, consultants—whatever we can do for the motion picture. We don't play as many films as Toronto or Sundance—we play only 30 features—but instead of breadth, we can be there for the filmmakers." Since festival founder and director Robert Faust left to join the web company MediaTrip, this will be the first edition under the new director, Richard Raddon.

Los Angeles International Short Film Festival

(Late September 2000)
1260 North Alexandria Ave., LA, CA 90029; (323) 663-0242; www.lashortsfest.com

Robert Arentz, founder and director of the Los Angeles International Short Film Festival, also began his festival in reaction to an absence. Arentz recognizes that many filmmakers get their start through shorts, and he sees his festival as a necessary event to support emerging filmmakers. "If there is no forum to showcase their films, what is going to encourage them to keep on pursuing what they're doing?" he asks. Last year the festival screened 90 films in five categories: drama, comedy, animation, documentary, and experimental. Arentz wants his event to have unique components. "You have to do more that just present the films," he explains. "The filmmakers have done that. That's their work. What is the festival director going to do to make the festival stand out and get the filmmakers and audience?" Answering his own challenge, Arentz held the last festival's experimental program outside under the stars at Barnsdale Art Park, and included numerous panels and demos for attendees, making the event educational as well as pleasurable.



All change at LAIFF: The DGA theater on Sunset Blvd, the new fest venue, and new festival director, Richard Raddon.

Outfest

(July 6-16, 2000)
1125 N. McCadden Place, Ste. 235, LA, CA 90038; (323) 960-9200; www.outfest.com

One of the oldest festivals in town is Outfest. Started in 1982 as a grassroots, UCLA student organization, Outfest is currently the largest cultural event for the gay community in Southern California and draws the biggest audience of all the L.A. festivals. Development director Scott Meckling describes the programming as "truly an array—transgendered, international, features,

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shorts, 35mm, 16mm, video, experimental, animation—really a gamut." Meckling sees Outfest as "a nexus for new filmmakers to come to Hollywood and have the opportunity to meet with professionals in the industry and learn from them. It's become literally part of our mission—to be a bridge between the filmmaking community and the entertainment industry."

ResFest Digital Film Fest
(Early November)

109 Minna Street, Ste. 390, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 437-2686; resfest@resfest.com; www.resfest.com



***PLUG*, a film, by USC students shown at the San Francisco-based RESFest Digital Film Festival, which travels to N.Y. & L.A.**

Yet another highlight in the L.A. festival scene is Res Fest, the travelling festival of digital shorts (and some features) organized by San Francisco-based Res Magazine. Thanks to the flurry of interest in digital filmmaking techniques, this year's L.A. festival, which took place over the first weekend in November, was a tremendous success, with most screenings sold out to audiences hungry for info and eager to see the latest in DV filmmaking.



Director Wayne Wang at L.A.'s Asian American Film Festival.

TOP COURTESY RESFEST; BELOW COURTESY VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS ARCHIVE;

LA Confidential

Insider secrets every filmmaker should know.

BY HOLLY WILLIS

EVERY CITY HAS ITS HIDDEN SECRETS AND SPECIAL resources, and L.A. is no exception. At the top of the list of unique, unbelievably necessary places would have to be **Eddie Brandt's Saturday Matinee Video.** Located off the beaten track way up in North Hollywood, this video store houses a treasure trove of impossible-to-find





Eddie Brandt's catalog (left) and AMPAS's Center for Motion Picture Study.

videos—including vintage TV shows and exploitation films. The staffers at this family-owned bookstore tend to be cranky or eccentric, but they're also cinephiles who go back several generations. So if you overlook the dysfunctionality and grumpiness, you'll find amazing stuff.

L.A. is also home to several excellent film bookstores, including **Samuel French** and **Larry Edmunds**, both located in Hollywood, but the best source for smart, new, theory-based film and video titles is the **Occidental College Bookstore** in Eagle Rock. Run with an unrivaled enthusiasm by Dennis Johnson, this L.A. cultural highlight can broaden your horizons by introducing new theories, new cinemas, and new filmmakers, and Johnson is ever helpful. If you don't see the obscure title you need, just ask, and he'll order it immediately.

If you're seeking hand-written notes by Irving Thalberg regarding the cuts necessary to reduce Erich von Stroheim's nine-hour *Greed* to a respectable two-hour version, or the insider's story on Marilyn Monroe during the making of *The Misfits*, go to the **Margaret Herrick Library at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences**. Located in a recently refurbished and amazing building on La Cienega, the library is an astounding resource, with clipping files on every American director, producer, screenwriter, and actor, as well as pristine copies of every issue of every film journal ever published (or so it seems!). Bring your white gloves for reviewing the thousands of studio prints going all the way back to the origins of cinema, and your driver's license, too — the frequently stern guard at the gate will let you in, but only if you can prove you're you!

Founded in 1977, the **Foundation for Art Resources** has been a consistent contributor to the discussion of art in L.A., and occasionally that discussion turns toward film and video. FAR also hosts FAR Bazzar, a collective, usually site-specific exhibition of installations and performances that's decidedly more bizarre than bazaar. In 1997, the event was titled SaFARi and was held at the old Los Angeles zoo in Griffith Park, with artists taking up residence in long-abandoned cages. More recently, FAR hosted Sonopticon, an event during which an array of media artists hosted sound/image installations and performances, like an arty rave in downtown L.A. FAR deserves inclusion here for continuing to insist that public events discussing media are important, and for hosting events that push the boundaries of genre and media.

Collector's Bookstore has a dizzying array of Hollywood memorabilia, including stills, scripts, old film magazines, movie posters, and files for classic films which include 35mm slides made from vintage release prints available for purchase. If you're a found footage filmmaker, Collector's also sells 35mm trailers from studio releases, which could form the basis of many an interesting new film project. The other two main sources for memorabilia are **Cinema Collectors**, which is somewhat smaller, but has nicer materials, and **Hollywood Book and Poster**, which has a slightly smaller inventory. (Strangely enough, the staff at all three places tends toward surliness, but again, persevere for best results—you won't find this stuff anywhere else in the world.)

Film preservationist **Bill Moritz** is known to have a temper, too (always for good reason), but his work restoring the classic films of Oskar Fischinger and collecting and preserving experimental films in general make him a local hero. Moritz teaches classes on the history of the avant-garde at CalArts, and helped establish the Absolut Panushka web site with colleague Christine Panushka. His essay on the history of experimental animation on the site is a must-read for all filmmakers [www.panushka.absolutvodka.com], and his general dedication to the art of cinema is an inspiration.

Gerry Fialka is yet another exemplary devotee of cinema. With no institutional affiliation whatsoever, Fialka has for several years curated both Documental and PXL This, programs of experimental work that screen in local book- and videostores. Thanks to Fialka's penchant for the weird and wild, L.A. gets to see material we wouldn't otherwise.

For filmmakers wanting to make movies rather than watch them, **Christy's Editorial** in Burbank offers the usual state-of-the-art digital editing equipment, but more importantly, it seems to be the last place where you can still buy double-perf splicing tape and rent a Steenbeck (one of those old-fashioned editing machines). Christy's also publishes "In Sync", a newsletter that lists used equipment available for sale and rent and is an invaluable resource for filmmakers working on a budget.

Another resource for the filmmaker on a tight budget is **Studio Film and Tape**, which specializes in studio recanned film (short ends) repackaged and sold at cut-rate prices, as well as "one-pass" videotape of sometimes dubious quality but unbeatable prices.

Finally, for filmmakers needing to let off some steam, **Al's Bar**, a seedy dive in downtown L.A., still, after many years, continues to host low-tech, small-gauge film events. Where else in L.A. can you have a beer, watch a super 8 movie and get into a brawl, all at the same time?

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PHAEDRA CINEMA

BY LISSA GIBBS



5455 Wilshire Blvd., Ste 1403, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (323) 938-9610; fax: (323) 938-9731; www.phaedracinema.com; info@phaedracinema.com
Contacts: Gregory Hatanaka, President & CEO (left); Roseann Cherenson, Executive Vice President (right); Taka Arai, Sr. VP Co-Productions and Creative Services; Steven Slome, Manager, Theatrical Sales

What is Phaedra Cinema?
We are an theatrical distributor of independent films—both arthouse films and multiplex fare.

Who is Phaedra?
Gregory Hatanaka, president & CEO; Roseann Cherenson, executive vice president; Taka Arai, Snr. VP co-productions and creative services; and Steven Slome, manager, theatrical sales.

Total number of employees:
Six.

How, when, and why did Phaedra come into being?
We started the company in late 1996 as a result of going to film festivals and seeing terrific films that weren't getting distribution in the U.S.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
Employment requirement: Must have fireman's training—also known as the ability to put out "fires!"

What would people be most surprised to learn about Phaedra or its founders and/or key staff?
That president Gregory Hatanaka is currently making his acting and directorial debut with a feature currently in production.

How many works are in your collection?
56.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:



(Clockwise from top): Caroleen Feeny & Saul Rubinek in Jonathan Kaufer's *Bad Manners*.

Alexa Jago & David Alex Rosen in Tina Valinsky's *Soft Toilet Seats*.

David Pillsbury in Thomas Johnson's, David Elton's & Eric Tiguini's film *Jerome*.

Takeshi "Beat" Kitano & Kazuya Kimura star in *Gonin*, directed by Takshi Ishii

The Terrorist, *L'Ennui*, *Just A Little Harmless Sex*, *Love Etc.*, *The Taxman*, *Fever Pitch*, *Portraits Chinois*, *Floating*, *Men Cry Bullets*, *Gonin*, *La Separation;* and the cult classic *Master of the Flying Guillotine*.

What types of works do you distribute?
Right now we acquire only feature-length films in 35mm, but we do have a few 16mm films in our catalogue. We acquire films from all over the world—new films and classic re-issues.

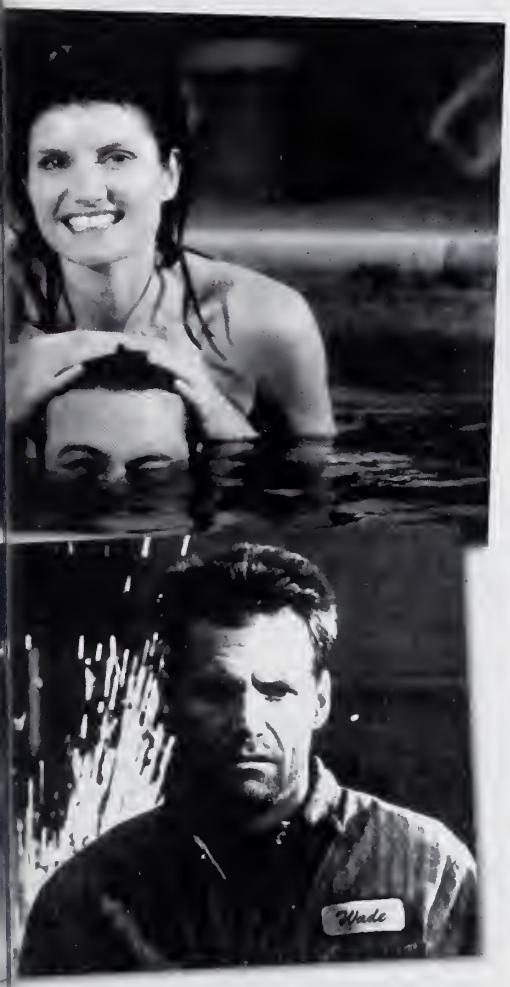
What drives you to acquire the films you do?
Unfortunately, some business concerns always enter the picture, but the most important thing is that we must really have a passion for any film that we take on. We usually select films by "committee," but if any one of us has a personal passion for a film, we will almost certainly acquire it.

Is Phaedra also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
We are currently involved in our first two co-productions, and we're very involved in helping raise the financing for those films. These films will be distributed by Phaedra, but at this point, as the films are still both

in the preproduction and development phases, we can't really tell you more about our distribution plans for them at this time. Ask us again later this year!

Is there such a thing as a "Phaedra" film?
Usually it is a little gem that was overlooked by the bigger indies, but our films have so many faces—French relationship dramas, an Indian psychological thriller, American romantic comedies, a kung fu film from the '70s, a 3-D animation, and so on. I don't think we can really coin one type of film as a "Phaedra film." We are very eclectic in our tastes.

You carry a few titles by noted Asian American independents. Is this a deliberate choice in the development of your collection or a particular business strategy?
It was very much a deliberate choice, as there were some wonderful Asian American indies out there, nearly all being overlooked by other distributors. We felt there was a strong niche market for these films that will only continue to grow and which we strongly support. Our biggest successes in this market so far are *Yellow* and *Strawberry Fields*.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY PHAEDRA

Best known title in Phaedra's collection:
The Indian film *The Terrorist,* or depending how much of a cult film aficionado you are, the 1970s kung fu epic *Master of the Flying Guillotine.*

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Creative promotions and heavy booking.

Where do Phaedra titles generally show?
We book our films all over the country, from Hawaii and Alaska to Maine and Florida. We play both with arthouse chains and theaters such as Landmark and Laemmle and, in some cases, we also go the studio multiplex route, playing with multiplex chains such as AMC, United Artists, and Carmike.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We attend many of the major festivals and markets including Sundance, AFM, Cannes, LAIFF, Toronto, MIFED, and IFFM in acquisition mode, but we do acquire many of our films from Los Angeles distributor screenings and from cassettes sent to our office. We are contacted regularly by phone, fax, and increasingly by email, from producers who have seen our web site. We really don't get involved in finishing funds, so we rarely look at a work-in-progress unless the producers plan to finish the film themselves.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From "no budget" to $10 million.

Biggest change at Phaedra in recent years:
We have grown from a one-man operation releasing strictly specialty fare to a six-person company which is now acquiring and releasing more commercial (multiplex) titles.

Most important issue facing Phaedra today:
The studios are increasingly getting into the indie distribution field and producing in-house much more homogenized, name-driven, bigger budget fare. This makes it much harder for the truly indie distributor to compete for screens and to garner press attention for a film that doesn't have a "name" cast and a multi-million dollar ad budget. Another major concern is the glut of indie films in the marketplace right now. Now that anyone with a DV camera and an iMac can make a film cheaply, the market is only going to get more glutted in the next few years. There are often as many as two or three distributor screenings *a day* now and as a small company, we just can't possibly cover all those screenings of available films. But we have to try so that we don't overlook that one special gem.

Where will Phaedra be 10 years from now?
Still supporting unique voices.

You knew you'd made it as a company when . . .
in our first year, we got an actual office with a dedicated fax line!

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
Our success with *The Terrorist* has been one of the best experiences a distributor can have—finding an overlooked film that we are incredibly passionate about and releasing it to great critical and exhibitor and public support. But as we are only just getting into the expansion of the release, it's even better to know that the best is yet to come!

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Running a revival repertory theater like the New Beverly Cinema in Los Angeles.

Other distributors which you admire and why:
Miramax's Harvey Weinstein for his incredible eye and marketing genius; New Yorker Films and Cowboy Booking for their incredible passion for each and every one of their films and filmmakers.

The best film you've seen lately was . . .
Nicolas Roeg's *Bad Timing.*

The difference between Phaedra and other distributors of independent films is . . .
that we don't just have one type or budget level of film we distribute.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice, it would be to . . .
have a unique vision and something original to convey. And do not make a film for yourself. If it has no audience, it is little more than a really expensive paperweight.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Sinbad: Beyond the Veil of Mists, the first motion capture 3-D animation, featuring voices by Brendan Fraser and Leonard Nimoy; *Went to Coney Island on a Mission from God—Be Back by Five* by Richard Schenkman, starring Jon Cryer, Ione Skye, and Frank Whaley; *Too Tired to Die* by Wonsuk Chin with Mira Sorvino; and *On the Run* by Bruno De Almeida with Michael Imperioli.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one that . . .
will increasingly employ digital technologies until celluloid (sadly) becomes a museum oddity.

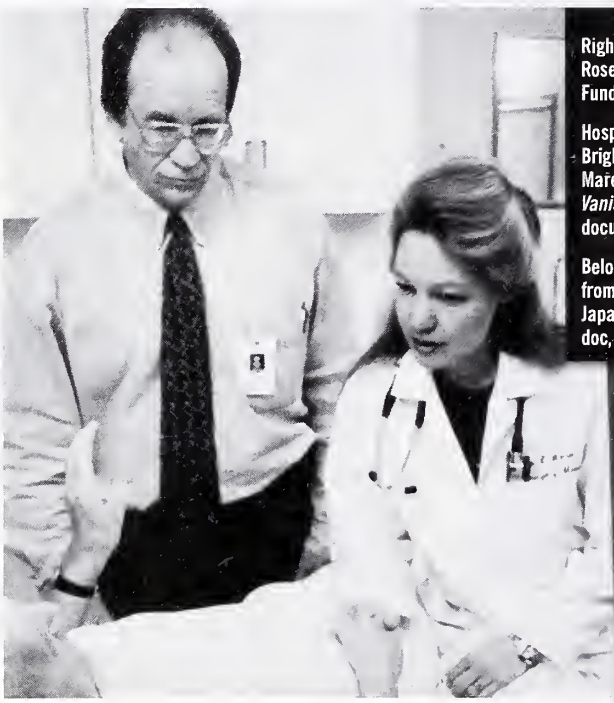
Famous last words:
"Let people laugh at what they want to laugh at."
—John Cassavetes

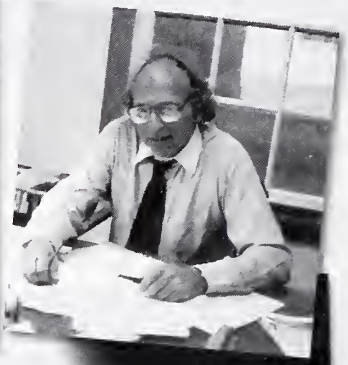
Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o The Independent, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013; or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net.

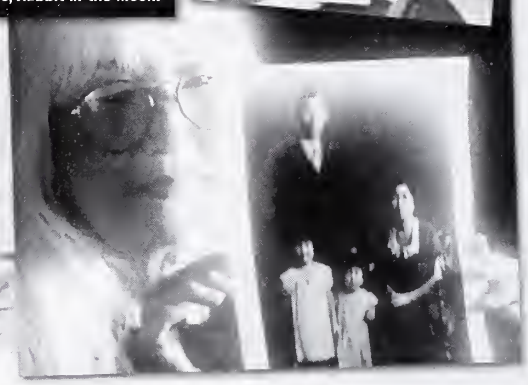
Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

PACIFIC PIONEER FILM FUND

BY MICHELLE COE







Right: Armin Rosencranz, Pioneer Fund Executive Director.

Hospice official Jim Brigham & filmmaker Maren Monsen in *The Vanishing Line*, her documentary on death.

Below: Emiko Omori from her WWII Japanese internment doc, *Rabbit in the Moon*.

Pacific Pioneer Film Fund, Armin Rosencranz, Exec. Director; Box 20504, Stanford, CA 94309; (650) 497-1133; armin@stanford.edu; www.pacificpioneer-fund.com

What is the Pacific Pioneer Fund?
We're a private foundation, and our exclusive mission is to support "emerging" West Coast documentary film- and videomakers.

How, when and why did the fund come into being?
We began making grants in 1980. One of the fund's benefactors, Nancy Sloss, was herself a documentary filmmaker. She realized that this was a greatly under-supported community of dedicated and talented artists.

The driving philosophy behind the fund is . . .
to help younger documentarians who have shown talent in previous works or roles to move to the next stage in their careers.

Can individuals apply for Pioneer Fund grants or are they limited to organizations?
Only organizations (public charities) that support individual filmmakers.

Any advice on choosing and working with a fiscal sponsor?
We prefer an organization that has a review process and will exercise some project oversight. Independents may apply through organizations that offer fiscal administration of projects. We've worked with Film Arts Foundation (San Francisco); Bay Area Video Coalition (San Francisco); International Documentary Assn. (L.A.); 911 Media Arts Center (Seattle); Northwest Film Center (Portland). The sponsor reviews the proposal and budget, and satisfies itself that the project is well thought out, has good film ideas, and is feasible within budget. These above organizations seem to be the most careful in doing the needed review.

What percentage of the Pacific Pioneer Fund's overall budget goes towards film or video projects?
100%.

What types of projects do you seek?
We seem to have a preference for political and social docs, but also support cultural and historical ones.

Name some of the best known titles and/or artists you have funded. What have been some of the (distribution/exhibition) paths of those projects?
Early on we funded Kristine Samuelson, Rob Epstein, and Terry Zwigoff among others. Several funded projects have gone on to receive PBS/CPB or NEH funding. About a third of each year's *P.O.V.* films are Pioneer grantees, including *Rabbit in the Moon* (Emiko Omori); *Baby, It's You* (Anne Makepeace); *The Vanishing Line* (Maren Monsen); *No Loans Today* (Lisanne Skyler). We've also funded *Samsara* (Ellen Bruno) and *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (Susana Munoz and Lourdes Portillo), and *The Times of Harvey Milk* (Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman).

How many media awards are given out per year? What is the total dollar amount awarded annually?
About 20 grants, totalling $100,000.

What is the average size of a grant?
$5,000-6,000.

What's the ratio of applicants to recipients?
About four to one.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications?
Applicants must live and work on the west coast (in California, Washington, or Oregon). Funds are not given to artists who live elsewhere. The sponsoring organization, however, can be from any state. Student projects are not eligible.

Do you fund projects at various stages of production?
Any stage.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines. Can filmmakers re-apply if they don't win?
We review applications three times a year, with postmark deadlines of 2/1, 5/15, and 10/1. We decide and notify all applicants within six weeks of these deadlines. Unsuccessful applicants are asked to wait a year before reapplying.

Are there time restrictions within which the funds must be used? Can the same individual apply for funds two years in a row?
No time restrictions. We currently make only one grant in a filmmaker's career.

Who makes up the staff of the Pacific Pioneer Fund?
Peter Sloss, president, Nancy Sloss, vice president; Hillary Sloss, Dan Geller and Ellen Bruno, board members. Half of us are filmmakers. Ellen and Dan are past grantees whom we've had as filmmaker consultants for individual panels and really liked their sound judgment so we invited them to the Board. Terms are five years, renewable once, when they rotate off, we'll presumably look for new board members from among past grantees.

As executive director, I [Armin Rosencranz] have the primary contact with all applicants.

Who makes the awards decisions?
The board itself makes all decisions. Often we have a past grantee join as a temporary board member to

screen applicants' submissions and make awards.

Tell us a little about the review process.
I review all applications, usually numbering 25 to 30, disqualify those that don't meet threshold qualifications (meaning they either have too much or too little experience), and forward the remaining 20 or so to one of our board members to select the 8 to 10 that will appear on our next meeting's agenda.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
Say it in your own words and don't rely on outside testimonials. We tend to be turned off by slick proposals which are often prepared by fundraising professionals. We do expect proposals to be clearly written and word processed, and to contain a full biography of the project director, with full titles of past films/videos that the applicant has worked on, including the length of the work, where exhibited, and the specific role performed by the applicant.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
Inflating their budgets.

What is a difficult hurdle you've had to get over as a funder?
Disqualifying people for being either "pre-emerging" or "emerged." Basically, if the applicant has completed one or two recognized projects or if she/he has performed key supporting roles (producer, editor, director of photography) in someone else's film, she/he qualifies as "emerging."

What would people most be surprised to learn about the Pacific Pioneer Fund and/or its founders?
We're very informal and approachable.

What distinguishes the Pioneer Fund from other funders?
Sad to say, we're the only California funder supporting emerging documentary filmmakers as artists. We're much more interested in helping a talented filmmaker's career than we are in a film's subject.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.
Any foundations that support film and/or video.

If not funding media, what would you be doing?
Teaching, running, watching children grow.

Famous last words:
"Don't let poor Nellie starve." (Charles II's deathbed words about his mistress, Nell Gwynne.)

Funder FAQ profiles a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.

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LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (MAY. 1 FOR JULY ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

BLACK HARVEST INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Aug. 20-29, IL. Deadline: May 10. Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago presents 5th annual fest, a noncompetitive showcase for contemporary cinema & video from the African diaspora. Fest will feature films from around the world, reflecting Black cultural, political & social experiences. Offerings from African nations, the U.S., Britain, Canada, Latin America & the Caribbean are expected. Recent African-American film & video provide the core of the fest. Directors will present feature-length & short work in all genres & an artists panel will provide additional commentary & insight on the black exp. in film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BHIFVF, Barbara Scharres, Film Center director, Film Center at School of Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus Dr. & Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3734; fax: 332-5859; ecastro@artic.edu; www.artic.edu/saic/art/filmcentr

BRECKENRIDGE FESTIVAL OF FILM, Sept. 14-17, CO. Early deadlines: April 28 (scripts); May 26 (films). Final deadlines: May 31 (scripts); June 23 (films). 19th annual fest presents 4-day program of films, receptions, premieres, tributes, writers' seminars & film education activities, providing unique & varied film fare shown at venues throughout the community. Approx. 50 ind. U.S. & int'l films are presented from over 300 entries. Best of Fest awarded to films in 5 cats: drama, comedy, doc, family/children & short. Our 4th annual screenplay competition will honor 1st place winners in adult drama, children/family, comedy & action/adventure cats. Scripts should meet U.S. Motion Picture Industry standards & be 90-130 pgs in length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (early); $40 (final). Contact: BFF, Terese Keil, Box 718, Riverwalk Center, 150 W. Adams, Breckenridge, CO 80424; (970) 453-6200; fax: 453-2692; filmfest@brecknet.com; www.brecknet.com/bff/home.html

CALIFORNIA WORKS, Aug. 18-Sept. 4, CA. Deadline: May 26. Fest, the juried fine arts competition of the CA Expo & State Fair, seeks short films & videos under 10 min. in length. Awards: Cash (totaling $14,500) & non-cash prizes. Formats: 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $12. Contact: CW, CA State Fair, Box 15649, Sacramento, CA 95852; (916) 263-3146; fax: 263-7903; entryoffice@calexpo.com; www.calexpo.com

CRESTED BUTTE REEL FEST, August 16-20, CO. Deadline: May 1 (regular); June 1 (student). Competitive fest focusing on short films under 40 min. in cats of animation, comedy, drama, experimental, student & under 60 min. in doc. Awards: Tom Skerritt Family will present the "Gold &Silver Illumination Awards" of cash & a unique statue for exceptional merit in educational & humanitarian filmmaking. "Bob Award" of $150 will be presented to the filmmaker who "pushes the envelope" the farthest. Gold & Silver "Best of Category" awards of $300 & $150 for each cat. plus winners aired on IFC cable channel. Audience Appreciation Award. Formats: 35mm, Beta, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fee: $30 (regular); $20 (student w/ proof of status). Entry form avail. on web site. Contact: CBFF, Jessica Hunt, Box 1733, Crested Butte, CO 81224; (970) 349-2600; fax: 349-1384; cbreelfest@webcom.com; www.crestedbuttereelfest.com

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 11-15, NY. Deadlines: May 13 (early); May 20 (shorts); June 30 (final). 7th annual fest for features, shorts & docs created "to provide a forum for filmmakers around the world who express an indie vision." Fest offers diverse programming w/ premieres by established filmmakers, breakthrough films by new directors & panel discussions w/ guests from industry. Juried awards incl. Golden Starfish ($160,000 value of in-kind services & goods awarded in 1999). Student shorts case (5 undergrad & 5 grad) receive grants of $2,500 each. Other prizes awarded for Best Doc Feature, Best Original Score, Best Short Film & Audience Favorites. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS, Beta SP & digital. Accepting entries beginning April 17. Entry fees: $25 (shorts); $50 (features/docs); $35 (early). Contact: HIFF, Denise Kasell, 609 Greenwich St., Ste. A-416, New York, NY 10014; (212) 905-1649; fax: 905-1769; hiff@hamptonsfest.org; www.hamptonsfest.org

HOLLYWOOD FILM FESTIVAL, August 4-9, CA. Deadline: May 31. Fest seeks to bridge the gap between emerging filmmakers & established Hollywood. Cats: features, docs, shorts. Awards: up to $100,000 in postproduction services. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $50. Contact: HFF, Carlos de Abreu, 433 N. Camden Dr., Ste. 600, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (310) 288-1882; fax: 475-0193; awards@hollywoodawards.com; www.hollywoodfestival.com

HOPE & DREAMS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-8, NJ. Deadline: May 6. Film & video competition. Films judged for general interest, production values & creativity. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Cash awards & prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $40. Contact: HDFF, Curator, Box 131, Hope, NJ 07844; fax: (908) 459-4681

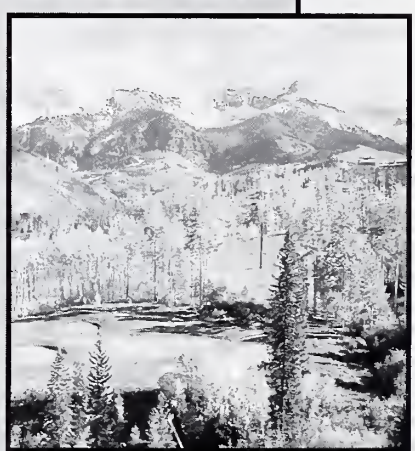
INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET, Sept. 15-22, NY. Deadline: Early deadline: May 19; final deadline, June 9. The IFFM is the only U.S. market devoted to new, emerging film talent. Market is attended by over 2,500 filmmakers, distributors, television & home video buyers, agents, development executives & festival programmers from the U.S. & abroad. IFFM is currently accepting submissions for the upcoming 22nd Market in the following categories: feature films (over 60 min.), short films (up to 40 min. & 40 to 60 min.), works-in-progress (edited scenes, trailer, intended for feature-length), script (copyrighted, for feature-length film). Separate membership & entry fees apply. All applicants must be current IFP or FAF members. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $400 (features); $350 (wop); $300 (shorts up to 40 min.); $325 (40-60 min.); $300.(video library only); $275(scripts); add $50 for late deadine. Contact: IFP, 104 West 29th St., 12 fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 465-8200 x. 436; fax: 465-8525; ifpny@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

LONG ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL, May 4-8, June & Aug., NY. Deadlines: April 30 (films); June 1 (screenplays). 17th annual competitive fest, screened over 50 features & 60 shorts last year, selected from entries submitted from around the world. Cats: arts & entertainment, doc & education, screenplay, and student. Awards: 1st prizes presented in all cats (film & video), w/ cash awards to be announced. Entry fees: $25 (screenplays & films up to 15 min.); $40 (15 to 30 min.); $60 (30-60 min.); $75 (over 60 min.). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Contact LIFF, Chris Cooke, Box 13243, Hauppauge, NY 11788; (800) 762-4769; fax: (516) 853-4888; suffolkfilm@yahoo.com; www.lifilm.org

MARGARET MEAD FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., NY. Deadline: May 8. Premiere U.S. fest for indie/doc film & video. Previewing doc films & videos; no restrictions on subject, length, or year of production. This year's special themes incl. Chicano/a Cinema, Space & Science. Film-/videomakers whose works are selected receive pass to all festival events; limited financial assistance & housing avail. After NY fest presentation, many titles packaged & tour to ind. film & community centers, museums & universities as part of nat'l & int'l touring fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta (NTSC only). Preview on VHS. Contact: MMFVF, American

Mile-High Festivals

With all the festivals cropping in Utah it's no surprise that their eastern neighbor Colorado has more to offer than just Telluride. Since 1981, the 4-day **Breckenridge Film Festival** has emphasized a relaxed atmosphere where featured guests are readily accessible to filmgoers. Writers, directors, & producers attend for the opportunity to discuss their work with audiences in informal sessions following screenings, at seminars, receptions and at the outdoor Film Forums. Complimentary lodging & transportation are provided for invited filmmakers and screenwriters during the event.



A newer edition to the festival landscape is the **Crested Butte Reel Fest,** which exclusively screens short films, packing in local audiences and presenting a variety of unique awards for educational, humanitarian, and envelope-pushing filmmaking. Popular with attending filmmakers who've lend their experience and know-how to panels and workshops, the festival also has an agreement with the Independent Film Channel to air festival winners nationwide. See Listings.

Museum of Natural History, Dept. of Education, Central Pk. W. at 79th St., NY, NY 10024; (212) 769-5305; fax: 769-5329; meadfest@amnh.org; www.amnh.org

MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL AND VIDEO FEST, Oct. 5-15, CA. Deadline: May 31 (early); June 30 (final). Invitational, noncompetitive fest screens American ind. films in cats: feature, doc, animated, short, interactive, children & experimental. Official Premieres Selection highlights feature-length narrative & doc premieres. Seminars bring in a stellar line-up of filmmakers & industry professionals. Fest has become premiere W. Coast event, w/ commitment to bringing new & innovative works to N. CA audiences. Filmmakers, distributors, press & large local audience meet in "an atmosphere where professional relationships thrive." All genres encouraged. Fest incl. around 100 programs of ind. features, docs, shorts & video works, as well as interactive exhibits, tributes, children's filmfest, seminars & special events. Entries must have been completed w/ in previous 18 mo.; industrial, promotional or instructional works not appropriate; premieres & new works emphasized. Annual audiences est. at 40,000. Awards: Audience & Jury awards for shorts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, multimedia, digital. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (early); $25 (final). Contact: MVFF, Mark Fishkin, Exec. Director/Zoë Elton, Dir. of Programming, Film Inst. of N. CA, 38 Miller Ave., Ste. 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256; fax: 383-8606; finc@well.com; www.finc.org

NEW JERSEY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June & July, NJ. Deadline: April 14. 5th annual fest showcases the best in ind. film & video, featuring premiere screenings of award-winning works, seminars, panels discussions, and guest appearances. Max film age is 24 months, no repeat entries. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta (NTSC only). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (up to 20 min.); $45 (between 20-50 min.); $60 (over 50 min.). Contact: NJIFF, Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC, Rutgers Univ. Program in Cinema Studies, 131 George St., 108 Ruth Adams Bldg., Douglass Campus, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.rci.rutgers.edu/ ~nigrin

NEXTFRAME: UFVA'S TOURING FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FILM & VIDEO, Oct., PA. Deadlines: April 30 (early); May 31 (final). Fest was founded in 1993 to survey & exhibit the very best in current student film & video worldwide. Emphasizes independence, creativity & new approaches to visual media. All entries must have been created by students enrolled in a college, university, or graduate school at time of prod. & should have been completed no earlier than May of previous 2 yrs. Cats: animation, doc, experimental & narrative. All works prescreened by panel of film/videomakers; finalists sent to judges. Awards: over $15,000 in prizes; 1st & 2nd place prizes awarded in each cat plus a Director's Choice Prize. Fest also holds a craft competition, incl. prizes for film editing, cinematography, screenwriting & sound design. About 30 works showcased each year. All works previewed at annual conference of Univ. Film & Video Assoc. (UFVA), in Aug. at Colorado Springs, CO. Premiere held in Philadelphia in Oct. Year-long int'l tour of selected fest finalists begins after premiere. Tour travels to major universities & art centers across the U.S. & around the globe. Past int'l venues have incl. Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Portugal & Japan. UFVA is an int'l org. dedicated to arts & sciences of film & video & development of motion pictures as medium of communication. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees $25; $20 (UFVA members & int'l entries). Early entries save $5. Contact: NextFrame, Dept. Film & Media Arts, Temple Univ. 011-00, Philadelphia, PA 19122; 1-800-499-UFVA; fax: (215) 204-6740; ufva@vm.temple.edu; www.temple.edu/nextframe.

NORTH CAROLINA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, August 3-6, NC. Deadline: May. Competitive fest aims to open up audiences to wide spectrum of films by &/or about gay/lesbian/bisexual/ transgender lives. Fest also has produced series of events leading up to the fest incl. series on early gay films ("The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly"). Fest accepts features, docs & shorts of any length, genre, or category. No restriction on film's year of completion. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: TBA. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL, Secam). Entry fee: $15. Contact: NCGLFF, Lawrence Ferber, Coordinator, 573 6th St. #1, Brooklyn, NY 11215; (212) 414-7654; or Jim Carl, Carolina Theater (919) 560-3040 x. 232; fax: 560-3065; NCGLFF@aol.com; www.carolinatheatre.org

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 9-13, RI. Deadline: June 1. Fest takes place in historic Providence, RI & has become a showcase for int'l independent filmmakers & their work. In 1999, fest screened 36 world premieres & 26 U.S. premieres. Fest accepts shorts, features & videos produced after 1997. Filmmakers may enter their films either in/out of competition. All films will be eligible for Fest Favorites awards. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, Final Draft, Kodak Vision, Positive Lifestyle, Tourisme Quebec Best Film, animation, & short. Awards: Fest Favorite awards. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP/SX, DV, S-VHS, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30 (shorts); $50 (features). Contact: RIIFF, Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 847-7590/861-4445; fax: 847-7590; flicksart@aol.com; www.film-festival.org

SAN DIEGO ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL, August 11-13. Deadlines: April 15 (early); May 15 (final). 1st annual fest, presented by the Asian American Journalists Assoc. Competitive fest seeks short to feature-length narratives, docs, experimental, animation & mixed genre works made by or about Asian & Pacific Americans. Awards incl. best feature, best short, best doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm (no double system), 3/4", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry form avail from web site. Entry fee: $10 (early), $15 (final); incl. SASE for tape return. Contact: SDAFF, c/o TACC, 7170 Convoy Ct., San Diego, CA 92111; (858) 616-8525; sdaff2000@hotmail.com; www.sdaff.org

WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL, July 20-Aug. 13, CA. Deadline: May 15. 14th annual fest held in Napa & Sonoma Valleys, 60 miles north of San Francisco. A competitive & non-competitive int'l showcase of 100+ feature films, shorts, docs & animation. Awards: Best First Feature, David L. Wolper Best Doc Prize, Best Short & Audience Choice Awards. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & digital. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35. Contact: WCFF, Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536; fax: 996-6964; wcfilmfest@aol.com; www.winecountryfilmfestival.com

WOODS HOLE FILM FESTIVAL, July 31-Aug. 7, MA. Deadline: May 1. Fest "is a showcase for independent film w/ special emphasis on regional filmmakers & cinematography." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (shorts); $35 (features). Contact: WHFF, Judy Laster, 50 Longwood Ave., Ste. 1020, Brookline, MA 02446; (617) 975-3361; who3@aol.com; www.woodhole.com

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FILMFEST, Aug. 4-6, CA. Deadline: May 1. Fest, sponsored by the Wine Co. Film Fest, seeks works



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film & video festival

for application & information :
www.wpbiff.org

deadline: April 13, 2000
shorts: thirty minutes or less

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West Palm Beach, FL 33401-6145
Phone: 561.802.3029

narrative
documentary
music video
experimental
&
animation

call for entries



suitable for family viewing. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Audience choice awards for best in all cats. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (shorts, animation); $35 (features, docs). Contact: YPFF, c/o Wine Co. FF, Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536; fax: 996-6964; wcfilmfest@aol.com

FOREIGN

ANTIMATTER: FESTIVAL OF UNDERGROUND SHORT FILM AND VIDEO, Canada, Sept. 15-24. Deadlines: May 5 (early); June 2 (final). 3rd annual fest seeks imaginative, volatile, entertaining & critical works existing outside the mainstream, regardless of the subversive nature of their content or their commercial viability. Fest is dedicated to film & video as art: we are anti-Hollywood & anti-censorship. Selected works will be incl. in a 3-city int'l tour. Entries must be under 30 min. & have been produced w/in last 2 yrs. Industrial, commercial, or studio products ineligible. Formats: 16mm, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10 (early); $15 (late). Contact: Antimatter, Todd Eacrett, Fest Dir., Studio F-1322 Broad St., Victoria, B.C., Canada, V8W-2A9; tel/fax: (250) 385-3327; rogueart@islandnet.com; www.islandnet.com/shortcircuit

DIVERCINE: INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE, July 3-14, Uruguay. Deadline: May 5. 9th annual fest presents overview of new films for children & adolescents, facilitates access to best & most diverse material created today & encourages distribution of new films for children. Cats: children, animation, doc, feature, short. Awards incl. prizes for best fiction, animation, doc; Guri Prize for best of fest, UNICEF Prize, to best film/video promoting the rights of a child, UNESCO prize to director of best Latin American or Caribbean film or video, OCIC Prize, best film/video enhancing human values, and Children's Jury Award. Entries cannot have been shown in Uruguay & must incl. complete tech info, five-line synopsis of work, dialogue script in English or Portuguese & VHS copy of film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: IFFCYP, Ricardo Casas, Cinemateca Uruguaya, Lorenzo Carnelli 1311, 11200 Montevideo, Uruguay; 011 598 2 4095795; fax: 598 2 409 4572; cinemuy@chasque.apc.org; www.cinemateca.org.uy

CARROUSEL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM DE RIMOUSKI, Sept. 17-24, Canada. Deadline: May 26. 18th annual fest aims to promote cinema for young people through animation, introductory & learning activities, film screenings & exchanges among the various int'l players in the film industry. Films must not have commercial distribution in Canada & not screened at any other Quebec festival. Films must be dubbed in French or in its original version w/out subtitles & accompanied by the written texts of dialogue & narration in French or English. Cats: long & short (competition), long & short (information), retro &/or tribute. Awards: Best long film, short film, actor, actress, screenplay, Humanitas award & public award. Jury members are 14-17 yrs old & from various countries. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: IFR, 92, 2e Rue Ouest C.P. 1462, Rimouski, Québec, Canada G5L 8M3 (418) 722-0103; fax: 724-9504; cifr@carrousel.qc.ca; www.carrousel.qc.ca

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 13-27, Scotland. Deadline: April 21. "Fest of discovery, celebration of cinema, center of debate & catalyst for new directors & first films." Began in 1947 as a doc film fest & is particular-

ly interested in nonfiction; also premieres. Showcases approx. 110 features & 120 shorts each yr. Awards incl. Standard Life Audience Award, Channel 4 Director's Award, Observer Doc Award & Pathé Performance Award. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: £10-£80 ($15-$130). Contact: EIFF, Lizze Francke, Director, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9BX, Scotland; 011 44 31 228-4051; fax: 44 31 229-5501; info@edfilmfest.org.uk; www.edfilmfest.org.uk

FANTASY FILMFEST, July 26-Aug. 23, Germany. Deadline: May 22. Noncompetitive fest is held in six German cities (Frankfurt, Cologne, Munich, Berlin, Stuttgart, Hamburg) & accepts 35mm short & feature films in the following cats: science fiction, horror, thriller & killer, animation, fantasy & action adventure. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC), incl. press kit w/ tape. No entry fee; ($25 tape return). Contact: FFF, Rosebud Entertainment, Fregestr. 36, 12161 Berlin, Germany; 011 49 30 861 45 32; fax: 49 30 861 45 39; rosebud_entertainment@t-online.de; www.fantasyfilmfest.com

FRAPNA FILM FESTIVAL ON NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT, Nov. 7-12, France. Deadline: May 31. Fest features works "that deal with nature, the environment & ecology." Entries must have been completed after 1/1/98. Awards: Cash prizes Format: Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: FRAPNA, Isere, Nadege Eymery or Pierre Sauget - MNEI-5 Place Bir-Hakeim, 38000 Grenoble, France; 011 33 476 42 64 08; fax: 33 476 44 63 36; frapna.dir@dial.oleane.com; www.frapna.org/isere

GALWAY FILM FLEADH, July 11-16, Ireland. Deadline: May 5. 12th annual fest is int'lly recognized & is the foremost event for presenting new Irish films alongside cutting edge int'l cinema. Last year over 30 Irish & int'l filmmakers were present w/ their films with numerous int'l critics in attendance. Awards: Best Irish short, best first short, best doc, best animation (all must be directed by Irish filmmakers); best director of first feature, best feature doc (open to all). Entry fee: $10. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, VHS. Preview on VHS. Contact: GFF, Cluain Mhuire, Monivea Rd., Galway, Ireland; 011 353 91 751655; fax: 353 91 770746; gafleadh@iol.ie; www.ireland.iol.ie/~galfilm/fleadh

GUERNSEY LILY INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-24, United Kingdom. Deadline: May 31. Fest seeks amateur film & videos "made for love, with no financial reward & without professional assistance other than processing, copying, or sound transfer." Works must be 30 min. or less & have been completed since May '98. Awards: Cash & non-cash prizes. Formats: DV, Mini-DV, super 8, 8mm, 16mm, S-VHS, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: £7 (approx. $10). Contact: GLIAFV, Joan M. Ozanne, La Geniesse, Forest, Guernsey, Channel Islands, United Kingdom GY8 0AQ; 011 44 1481 38147; fax: 44 1481 35989; landjoz@guernsey.net

MENIGOUTE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FILMS, Oct. 28-Nov. 2, France. Deadline: May 15. 6-day fest, founded in '85, shows about 40 films concerning ornithological subjects, as well as all wildlife (wild mammals, reptiles or swimming creatures). Assocs & orgs concerned w/ environmental issues invited to present activities in various forums. Regional tours organized each day specifically in bird watching areas. 15-20 artists present photographs, paintings & sculpture. Entries must be French premieres. Cats: Wildlife/environmental. Awards: cash prizes from 10,000FF ($1,486) to 30,000FF ($4,458). Formats: 16mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: IFOF, Marie Christine Brouard, résidence la Fontaine, BP 5, 79340 Ménigoute, France; 011 33 5 49 69 90 09; fax: 33 5 49 69 97 25; mainate@menigoute-festival.org; www.menigoute-festival.org

MILAN FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 11-17, Italy. Deadline: April 17. 5th annual competitive fest incl. workshops, meetings, concerts, tributes & parties. Past fests have incl. works from over 600 directors & 50 countries. Cats: features & shorts. Awards: Feature (5 million lira, $2,517); Short & Aprile Awards (3 million lira each, $1,510). Works of any genre or length accepted (over 45 min. for features). Incl. info on work & creators. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, digital, Betacam, VHS. Preview on VHS (PAL only). No entry fee. Contact: MFF, c/o Associazione Aprile, Via Carroccio 12, I-20123, Milan, Italy; tel/fax: 011 39 0289 421 256; info@milanofilmfestival.it; wwwmilanofilmfestival.it

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA AND NEW MEDIA, Oct. 12-22, Canada. Deadline: May 15. 29th annual fest seeks innovative works that explore new ideas & new technologies. Works must have been produced after Jan. 1, 1999. All works should be in their original language, preferably w/ English or French subtitles. Cats: feature, short & medium-length film & video, and new media. Awards: best feature, best short/medium, best new media, best Canadian work, Public Choice Award. Formats: All formats accepted. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (U.S.); $25 (Cdn). Contact: FCMM, 3530 Boul. St.-Laurent, Montréal, Quebec Canada H2X 2V1; (514) 847-9272; fax: 847-0732; montrealfest@fcmm.com; www.fcmm.com

MOVING PICTURES FESTIVAL OF DANCE ON FILM AND VIDEO, Oct., Canada. Deadline: May 30. Fest seeks "innovative work that goes beyond a simple document of choreography, that demonstrates the kinetic possibilities of movement recorded for the screen." Rough cuts will be considered. All styles & genres accepted. Awards: Prizes in the choreography & doc cats. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (U.S.); $20 (Cdn). Contact: MPFDFV, 235 College St., #102, Toronto, Ontario Canada M5T 1R5; (416) 961-5424; fax: 961-5624; movingpix@total.net; www.total.net/~movingpix

MUNICH FILM FESTIVAL, June 24-July 1, Germany. Deadline: May 1. Fest is open to all genres w/ awards for best int'l first feature film, Best TV movie, One Future Prize, w/ special awards for German filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: MFF, Eberhard Hauff, Director, Kaiserstr. 39, D-80801 München, Germany; 011 49 89 38 19040; fax: 49 89 38 190426; festivalleitung@filmfest-muenchen.de; www.filmfest-muenchen.de

SARAJEVO FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 18-26, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Deadline: June 1. Fest was established by Obala Art Center in 1995 & features approx. 100 shorts and features in 4 cats: Competition, Balkan-Eastern European, Panorama, and a Hollywood section. Awards in first 2 cats. Fest also offers sidebar programs including workshops, lectures and exhibitions. Recognized by FIAPF. Fest invites directors of selected films to attend and hosts 100-125 international guests (producers, filmmakers and actors, film professionals, journalists). Formats: 16mm & 35mm (optical soundtrack only). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SFF, H. Kresevljakovica 13, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; 011 387 71 665-532, 668-186; fax: 387 71 664-547; sff@sff.ba; www.sff.ba

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Competitions

16th ANNUAL IDA DISTINGUISHED DOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS COMPETITION Cats: feature, short, David A. Wolper student doc, limited series, strand program, TV, magazine segment; awards: ABC News Videosource award & Pare Lorentz award. Winners honored at 16th Annual Awards Gala on Oct. 27 & screened at DocFest Oct. 28. Early bird deadline w/ discount: April 15; final deadline May 15. For entry forms: (310) 284- 8422 x. 68; ida@artnet.net; www.documentary.org

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL HEART OF FILM SCREENPLAY COMPETITION Call for entries. Three cats: feature length adult/mature themes, feature length children/family, feature length comedy. Awards: cash prizes, air fare (up to $500), hotel accomm. (up to $500), VIP pass to Heart of Film Screenwriters Conference (Oct. 12-19), Heart of Film Bronzed Award. Entry fee: $40. Deadline: May 15. For more info: (800) 310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Est. to give you experience, feedback, direction on your current synopsis writing. You may enter a one-page synopsis of a screenplay you already have written, or a screenplay you intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, valued at $299, plus a free Script Detail of the screenplay of your choice valued at $150. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entryform.html

IFC2000, the national student film competition presented by the IFP & the IFC prizes to student films w/ $10, 000 Grand Prize awarded to the best film from any category. Grand prize also receives a matching product grant from Eastman Kodak. Open to students currently enrolled in a film degree program at an accredited graduate or undergraduate American school. Eligible: 16mm, 35mm films, and videos under 30 min., produced since May '99. Finalists & winners will be screened at the 22nd Independent Feature Film Market, September, 2000; and winning films are also screened in Los Angeles & on the Independent Film Channel. Deadline: May 12, 2000. For an application, contact: IFP, 104 W. 29th St., 12th Fl., N.Y., NY 10001-5310; (212) 465-8200 ext. 108; 465-8525; marketinfo@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted. First prize: $1,000. Early entry fee: $40. Early deadline fee: $50. Deadline Jan. 31, 2001. Rules & entry forms on web site or send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (831) 646-0910; mryfilm@aol.com; www.filmmonterey.org

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ $40 entry fee payable to NTV, 21 Central Park West, Ste. 1T, NY, NY 10023.

OHIO INDEPENDENT SCREENPLAY AWARDS: Call for entries for Best Screenplay Award & Best Northcoast Screenplay Awards. All genres accepted. Prizes incl. $1,000, screenplay reading at the Ohio Independent Film Festival in Nov., submission to LA literary agent, screenwriting software & industry script analysis. Early entry fee (postmarked by May 15): $40 per screenplay; late entry fee (postmarked by June 1): $60 per screenplay. Contact: OIFF, 1121 Clark Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44109; (216) 781-1755; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com; www.ohiofest.com

SCRIPTAPALOOZA is a company that not only champions the talented writer, but takes that writer beyond just prize money. Creates golden opportunities for winning writers to possibly be discovered, get representation, have their script optioned, or to outright sell it. Final deadline (April 15 postmark): $45. For rules, guidelines & appl.: www.scriptapalooza.com; Scriptapalooza, 7775 Sunset Blvd., PMB # 200, Hollywood, CA 90046.

Conferences and Workshops

MAESTRO: Workshops for independent media artists and organizations will be presented during May in Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Buffalo. See page 68 in this issue.

"TUCSON 2000," The Alliance for Community Media's 2000 Int'l Conference & Trade Show, July 12-15. Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson, AZ. For more info, contact ACM, 666 11th St., NW, Ste. 740, Washington, DC, 20001; (202) 393-2650

Films and Tapes Wanted

2000 GAIT FESTIVAL will exhibit independently produced pilots in Drama, Comedy, Reality Based Program, Animation, Children's Programming, & News/ Doc. It will take place at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in Los Angeles September 5-8, 2000. (This is the week prior to the Emmy Awards.) Submission fees: $100. Deadline is May 15. www.tv-pilot.com is designed to allow independent TV producers post info about & streaming video clips of their pilots for programming buyers, agents, manager & advertisers. Users of the site will be able to search different criteria, conduct a query, view the results & order a full copy of the pilot production directly from the independent producer. www.tv-pilot.com

ALWAYS INDEPENDENT FILMS shows independent feature films, short films, docs & animation. In addition, AIF features original made-for-Internet content as well as online film festivals. www.alwaysif.com

ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in exper., abstract & doc cats. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 1335 Huron River Dr. #19, Ypsilanti, MI 48197; anomalousvideo@hotmail.com

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for 2000 video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resumé, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

ATOMFILMS is innovative, short film distribution & marketing company seeking high-quality live action, animation & digital short films for broadcast & cable television, home video, DVD, Internet, hospitality, theatrical & educational markets. We are looking for films in any genre w/ a length of 30 min. or less. Films must have all clearance & rights for commercial distrib. in order to be considered. Send submissions on VHS, NTSC, PAL or SECAM to AtomFilms, Attn: Acquisitions, 815 Western Ave., Ste. 300, Seattle, WA 98104; (206) 264-2735; info@atomfilms.com; www.atomfilms.com; Tapes not returned.

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo, NY cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@ pce.net

BIGSTAR.COM: call for submissions from independent filmmakers for NY-based BigStar Broadband Film Festival, seeking to showcase the best features, shorts & animation. Fest will run all year on BigStar starting later this spring. As a participant in fest, visitors to BigStar will be able to view your film—in its full length—streamed over their internet connection using BigStar's Broadband Theater player. Films viewable in their entirety 24 hrs a day, seven days a week. No entry fee. To submit a title, contact: independentfilms@bigstar.com for a submission form & fest agreement.

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for indep. shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions are welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for Internet; films that challenge assumptions of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.TheBitScreen.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital submissions of 30 min. or less on an ongoing basis for their monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." 2000 is 5th year of program. Artists paid honorarium & will qualify for nonexclusive distribution deal, which will incl. license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short, experimental, narrative, alternative, avant-garde, humorous, dramatic, erotic, subversive, animation, underground works. Works selected will, in most cases, continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings & may qualify for Blackchair's DVD/VHS home video compilations as well as netcasting via microcinema.com website. Submit VHS/or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone no. along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Blackchair Productions, 2318 2nd Ave.,

PMP #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121; (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com; Unable to return submissions.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE (formerly Gowanus Arts Exchange) accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre/subject matter. Deadline: ongoing. Send tapes & SASE to: The Ind. Film & Video Series, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018.

CIN(E)-POETRY FESTIVAL accepting short poetry or literary films, videos, docs & multimedia pieces for catalog & upcoming poetry video film festival. Request entry form: Cin(E)-Poetry, 934 Brannan St., 2 fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-9261; fax: 552-9261; poetry@nationalpoetry.org

CITY ZOOMS—SHORTS (any format/genre; max 10 min.) by 17-29 yr old filmmakers on LA wanted for Hanover film festival on megacities. Deadline: April 12. Entry fee: $10; fax: (520) 223-7061; CityZoomsLA@hotmail.com

Pilots Wanted

The 2000 GAIT (Global Association of Independent Television) Festival is the first fest solely dedicated to independently produced TV pilots. Part of Brian Nash (l) & Joe Weber's (r) GAIT initiative, the fest's two-tiered approach helps both buyers & sellers. Cable TV and the Internet has opened up numerous venues that need & want more adventurous fare. GAIT plans to help these outlets find what they are looking for at a one-stop shopping web site: www.TV-Pilot.com. The site lists programs by genre, subgenre, running time, place of production & target audience, along with any other info the filmmakers deem vital. Clips can be sampled 24/7 online between the usual circuit of conferences, festivals & trade shows. See Listing.



D.FILM Digital Film Festival [www.dfilm.com] is a traveling & online showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. D.FILM was official digital film program at 1999 Cannes Film Festival. Look for it in your city & visit web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game.

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; www.libertynet.org/dutv

FILMFILM.COM: the Internet's complete movie studio [www.filmfilm.com] seeks submissions on on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: info@filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES is accepting shorts, feature works-in-progress & Web films seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return). (310) 313-6935.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL: Festival for films promoting non-stereotypical images of the Italian-American experience & work of Italian-American writers, directors, & actors. Noncompetitive fest will choose two hrs of films for it's 2000 program. there will be five New York screenings of the program in late spring/early summer 2000, followed by a nat'l tour in the fall. All formats under 45 min. doc or narrative. Preview on VHS only. Deadline: April 30.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, experimental & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/ San Jose, is looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218

LOUISIANA VIDEO SHORTS FESTIVAL: June 11, LA. Early Deadline: April 9. Late deadline: April 23. Fest is open to all Louisiana residents. Entries can be just about anything your heart desires—experimental, animation, music video, drama, doc, psa, etc. Entries must be 9 min. or less produced in any film, video or computer animation format but must be submitted on BetaSP, 3/4", S-VHS, VHS or Hi8/8mm videotape. There is also a youth category for high school age entrants between the ages of 13-18. NOVAC, 4840 Banks St., New Orleans, LA 70119; (504) 486-9192; fax: 486-9229; novac@neosoft.com; NOVACVideo@aol.com; www.gnofn.org/~novac

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docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. MAKOR's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman: (212) 601-1021; ken.sherman@makor.org

MOVIES BY MOONLIGHT; 1st Annual Outdoor Fim Program will take place in Queens, NY in June 2000. Seeking films/videos 15 min. or less. Deadline: May 15. Send VHS tape, info sheet (& SASE for return) to: Rockaway Artists' Alliance, 260 Beach 116th St., Rockaway Park, NY 11694.

NETBROADCASTER.COM seeks films & videos for streaming on the net. Expose your feature or short to int'l audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, comedy, animation, docs, experimental, music videos, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all! Netbroadcaster.com launched last fall. Site hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of largest ISPs on the net: films@alchemy.net

NEW VENUE [www.newvenue.com] showcases movies made specifically for Internet & offers filmmakers a guide to optimizing video for web. Submit a digital flick for Y2K season now: QuickTime or Flash, 5MB or less (15 min. or less for streaming).

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

P.O.V., PBS's award-winning showcase of independent, non-fiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of indep. nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31; (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland, OR & a project of Rodeo Film Company, Peripheral Produce seeks to promote experimental, abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

POTHOLE PICTURES, a revitalized 450 seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA seeks 35mm films for our "Meet the Director" series—a showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length or genre. Connection to New England whether thru subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers helpful but not necessary. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com

PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET TV wants your home TV shows & movies. 5-30+ min. If you have one show great, if you can do it weekly, even better! Aiming for more of an adult viewing crowd—basically anything goes as long as it's legal. Open your mind & see what falls out. Also Flash animations/movies/cartoons/3D rendered short films. pbtv2@yahoo.com; http://members.xoom.com/pbtv2/

PUT MONEY IN YOUR SHORTS: Centerseat.com Film Festival is now licensing short films for broadcast on its entertainment & info megasite. Your film can be the core of an immersion interactive experience. No cost to you EVER! Earn royalties instead. To submit your film for our premiere season, log on to www.centerseat.com/indie/submit

SHORT TV is the only cable network entirely dedicated to short films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. To submit your film, visit www.shorttv.com. For more info, call: (212) 226-6258.

SONO ARTS CELEBRATION 2000, annual summer arts festival in Norwalk, CT looking for short video/film for outdoor screening. Early August. Humor, animation, etc. Send VHS: Film Coordinator, Sono Arts, Box 600, Norwalk, CT; Lisa (203) 226-8313.

SOUTHWEST ALTERNATIVE MEDIA PROJECT (SWAMP) is looking for possible inclusion in the 25th season of *The Territory*, the longest-running PBS showcase of independent film/video in the country. Recent works under 30 min. in all genres that are avail. for non-exclusive, statewide (Texas) broadcast btwn. Oct. 2000-Sept. 2001. Send VHS/NTSC copy of work, brief synopsis & filmmaker bio to: SWAMP, 1519 W. Main, Houston, TX., 77006; (713) 522-8592; swamp@swamp.org; www.swamp.org

TAG-TV.COM is accepting short films, videos & animation to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com for more info

UNDERGROUNDFILM.COM is an online film community & entertainment destination that celebrates the moving image & independent spirit of the Internet. Website is a well trafficked online exhibition space & offers filmmakers ability to both show & sell their work via their own Internet "storefront". Currently seeking film & screenplay submissions to showcase online. QuickTime player required. For info: (212) 206-1995; adrien@undergroundfilm.com; www.undergroundfilm.com

UNQUOTE TV: Weekly nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative work of all genres. Produced at DUTV-Cable 54 & cablecast nationally, Unquote Television is now in its 10th year. Send to: Unquote TV c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. 9B/4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short animation, experimental, or doc videos for on-going screening series. No narrative or works made on film. Currently searching for int'l videos for upcoming series in the spring. Send non-returnable VHS tape w/ brief bio & $1 to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, NY, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hr weekly show w/ videos followed by info on makers. Send VHS/S-VHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

ZOOM: During 70s, *ZOOM* was a kids'-only series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, films, games & more. *ZOOM* is back & seeking films, animation & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & may see their film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super 8, 16mm, Beta. Age: 7-16. Subjects should be age

appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-3883; marcy_gardner@wgbh.org

Publications

7th INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE (IFFCON 2000) transcripts avail. IFFCON is North America's premiere financing event for independent film. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers incl. "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Financing w/ Int'l TV." Send $46 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4506; fax: 399-4507; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & U.S. Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, LAVA, 124 Washington Pl., NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

FILM & VIDEO seeking written reviews of University Film & Video Association member films for possible inclusion in journal—send approx. 5 double-spaced pages to: lerickson3@aol.com; Temple University, Dept. of Film & Media Arts, 14E Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8472.

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: Watson-Guptill Guide to workshops, conferences, artists' colonies & academic programs by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities—more than 150 of them—for a wide variety of filmmakers . . . from feature to doc to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, 1515 Broadway, NY, NY10036.

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Find an independent audience! The IPA's new directory to the independent magazine world can give you the name & number of the editor you need. For just $24.95 (plus $3.05 S&H) *Annotations: A Guide To The Independent Press* can open up a world of diverse & exciting contacts. For order send a check to: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110-1836; (415) 634-4401; www.indypress.org

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

Resources and Funds

8x10GLOSSY.COM: Online artists' co-op offers free listing for all actors, technicians & orgs in directory & searchable database, free email address (can be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of bulletin board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

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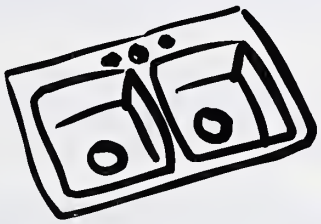


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NOTICES

ARTS LINK U.S./JAPAN CREATIVE ARTIST'S PROGRAM provides six-month residencies in Japan for individual creative artists in any discipline. Artists work on individual project which may incl. new work or pursuit of individual artistic goals. Fellows should also consider how Japan's cultures can influence their creative work. Applications must be postmarked by June 26. Contact: Arts Link, CEC Int'l Partners, 12 West 31 St., NY, NY 10001-4415; artslink@cecip.org

BAVC ARTIST EQUIP. ACCESS AWARDS; Each winner will receive access to the Bay Area Video Coalition's postproduction facility (incl. Avid 1000/400 & Media 100) & technical support services as well as publicity through BAVC's publications & web site. Any BAVC member working on a noncommercial program in the postproduction phase is eligible for the 8th annual awards. Nonmembers interested in applying must become BAVC members. Deadline: May 1. Applics. are. avail. on web site: www.bavc.org; (415) 861-3282.

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute: (213) 856-7690.

CA CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & to pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps, travel & similar activities necessary to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ CA Council for the Humanities staff. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste. 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA (213) 623-5993; in San Diego (619) 232-4020; www.calhum.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (800) 201-6201; (916) 322-6555; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents this interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compostitions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed at the click of a mouse. Contact: harvestw@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

EASTMAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Colleges & Univs. in U.S. & Canada which offer a BA/BS/BFA, MA/MFA in film or film production may nominate two students for $5,000 scholarships. Deadline: June 15. For nomination form, write to Betsy A. McLane, International Documentary Association, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Program Dir., Experimental TV Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FAF 2000 GRANTS PROGRAM: Funds film & video artists living in the 10 Bay Area counties (S.F., Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz). Created in 1984, the "Fund for Independent Cinema" has awarded over $800,000 to 319 film & video artists & producers. 2000 Grants Program strategically targeted to support those most difficult categories for fundraising:

new personal works (intended for short, artist-made films or videos that can be fully realized within grant amount); project development & completion/distribution in any genre. Recipients from 1999 are ineligible in 2000; recipients from past years must provide a report on previous award(s). Semi-finalists will be asked to submit sample work. Awards will be announced in July. Applicants must submit a completed applic. form, project budget, film/videography & short description of proposed work Deadline: April 28. Applics. & guidelines avail. at Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl. San Francisco, CA 94103; info@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

FAF 2000 STAND: (Support, Training & Access for New Directors) awards equipment, access & training (value: $1,500) & professional mentorship to first-time film- & videomakers from historically under-represented communities. Projects can be up to 6 min. in length on super 8, 16mm, VHS & DV. Deadline: April 28. Applics. & guidelines avail. at Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, info@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative, animated & experimental projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

IDA/DAVID L. WOLPER STUDENT DOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD is a $1,000 honorarium presented annually to recognize exceptional achievement in nonfiction film & video at university level. Films & videos must be produced by registered students & completed between 1/1/99 & 4/15/00. Winner is honored at 16th Annual IDA Awards Gala on Oct. 27, has film screened at Docufest on Oct. 28 & receives $1,000 certificate from Eastman Kodak for film stock. Deadline: May 15. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, L.A., CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

ITVS OPEN CALL 2K: ITVS considers proposals for new innovative programs of standard broadcast length for public television on on-going basis. ITVS seeks provocative, spellbinding stories from diverse points of view & diverse communities. No finished works. Projects in any genre (comedy, satire, animation, drama, doc, experimental, short form) or stage of development will be considered. Programs should break traditional molds of exploring cultural, political, social, or economic issues, take creative risks, or give voice to those not usually heard. Deadline: Sept. 15. Download applications & guidelines at www.itvs.org. Contact: (415) 356-8383 x. 232; Beky_Hayes@itvs.pbs.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-page letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

LInCS 2000 (Local Independents Collaborating w/ Stations), a funding initiative of ITVS, provides incentive or matching moneys ($10,000-$65,000) for partnerships btwn public TV stations, & indie producers. Series, single shows & interstitial pkgs will be considered, as will projects in any genre or stage of development. Programs should stimulate civic dis-

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course & break traditional molds of exploring complex cultural, political, social or economic issues. Indie film & videomakers are encouraged to seek partnerships w/ their local public television stations. Deadline: April 28. Download applic. & guidelines at www.itvs.org; Heidi_Schuster@itvs.pbs.org; (415) 356-8383 x. 230.

MEDIA ALLIANCE INDEPENDENT RADIO/SOUND ART FELLOWSHIP provides production support for individual artists working in independent radio or sound art discipline. Three fellowships of $5,000 each will be awarded. Applicants must be working/living within the five boroughs of NYC. Grant was made possible by Jerome Foundation. Deadline: May 15 (postmarked). Contact: Rachel Melman at Media Alliance (212) 560-2919; MA, c/o WNET, 450 W. 33rd St, NY, NY 10001; www.mediaalliance.org; audio grant@hotmail.com

911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER offers $3,000 in services for media artist grant. Two $1,500 grants of production services will go to established indie video/film or multimedia artist, or to an emerging artist. Our Media Artist Grant supports by giving opportunities to individuals making films & videos throughout WA state. Grant can be used toward either a 911 Media Arts workshop, our digital video camera & light kit, or any of our 5 editing suites. 911's suites incl. a multimedia workstation; nonlinear Avid MCXpress; nonlinear Avid Media Composer 8000; & multi-format analog video editing suite. Facilities accommodate editing in the following formats: Betacam SP, DVCAM, DVC Pro, DV, Hi-8, 3/4" SP, S-VHS, & VHS. Deadline: June 30. Contact Tim Coulter, Media Services Dir., (206) 682-6552; tim@911media.org; or send SASE to: 911 Media Arts Center, Media Artist Grant, 117 Yale Ave N., Seattle, WA 98109.

NAATA provides funding for independent productions of new Asian American programs for public television. Current calls incl. annual open call for production funding (postmarked June 2) & open call for completion funding (postmarked Sept. 29.) Appl. or info write NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St. 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

NEW DAY FILMS, premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applics. for new membership. Contact: NDF, (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 unique visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites are free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL on the Arts' Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $5,000 in funds for distributions of recently completed independent media arts projects by NY artists. Open to audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work & installation art. Deadline June 30. Contact: NYSCA-EMF Program, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; (212) 387-7058; fax: 387-7168; cmeyer@nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by the IFC, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus is on English lang., feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: NWF, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

OCTOBER EVENT GRANTS: NY Council for the Humanities celebrates State Humanities Month (Oct.)—a celebration of history, culture & human imagination w/ awards for local programming which reflect diversity of humanities institutions & subjects. Deadline: May 1. Contact: NYCH, 150 Broadway, Ste. 1700, NY, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131; fax: 233-4607; hum@echonyc.com; www.culturefront.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No applic. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS (PIC) announces Media Fund 2000 call for proposals for programs intended for national public television. Doc, performance, narrative, animation, children's or cultural affairs programming proposals eligible. PIC is particularly interested in projects that examine & illuminate the realities of Pacific Islander issues such as diversity, identity & spirituality. Must be over 60 min. unless part of a series. Awards of up to $50,000 available for works-in-progress including production, postproduction, marketing & distribution. Research & development & scripting phases may receive up to $15,000. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Annie Moriyasu, Media Fund, to PIC, 1221 Kapi'olani Blvd., Ste. 6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814, 808-591-0059; fax: 591-1114; moriyasu@aloha.net; www.piccom.org

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadlines: May 15 & Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; wwwpacificpioneerfund.com

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues w/ goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of prod.; film & video projects in preproduction or distribution stages only. Grants range from $3,000-$8,000. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Vivianna Bianchi, Program Officer, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, NY, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

ROBERT FLAHERTY FILM SEMINAR, Grants-in-aid available to qualified candidates to attend the 46th Robert Flaherty Film Seminar to be held at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY from June 16-22. Awards range from $200-$400 towards the registration of $700 (transportation

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not incl.) Application deadline is April 17.Contact: L. Somi Roy, Exec. Director, Int'l Film Seminars, Inc., 462 Broadway, Ste. 510, NY, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax: 925-3482; ifs@flahertyseminar.org; www.flahertyseminar.org

ROBIN EICKMAN FEATURE FILM AWARD: Created in 1999 to honor the longtime executive director of the San Francisco Film & Video Arts Commission, this award provides goods & services toward production of a feature film budgeted under $200,000. Residency & other requirements of the FAF Grants Program apply. Detailed treatment required. Semi-finalists will be asked to provide sample work & complete script. Deadline: April 28. Applications & guidelines avail. at Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; info@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postproduction services at discounted rates. For rate card & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-9991; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org



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HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA, a leader in distributing educational materials for over 25 years, is now looking for new video & film productions to be included exclusively in its 2000 catalog. HRM is specifically acquiring programs that deal w/ teen drug abuse, sexuality, relationships, smoking & violence. All content should be appropriate for classroom use. Please submit your production on VHS w/ a letter describing any prior distribution, reviews & awards. Only videotapes w/ SASEs will be returned. Send to: Human Relations Media, Attn: Creative Director, 41 Kensico Dr., Mt. Kisco, NY 10549. Visit us online at www.hrmvideo.com

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AWARD-WINNING EDITOR, w/ Avid and Beta SP facility. Features, shorts, doc, music videos, educational, industrials, demos. Trilingual: Spanish, English, Catalan. Nuria Olive-Belles (212) 627-9256.

BETA SP & DVCAM Videographer with both cameras, lights, monitors, mics & wireless. Very portable, light weight & I'm fast. Experience includes: documentaries, industrials, fundraisers & fashion. Please call John Kelleran (212) 334-3851.

BETA SP VIDEOGRAPHER, skilled in everything from exterior hand held to Rembrandt interior lighting styles, seeking interesting projects to shoot. Has attractive Sony Betacam SP, cool sets of lights & sensitive microphones. Willing to travel. Yitzhak Gol (718) 591-2760.

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BROADCAST ENGINEER, 15 yrs. exp. Has Betacam SP location package. 3-chip mini DV. Looking to work on projects. Michael (212) 691-1311.

CAMERAPERSON: Visual storyteller loves to collaborate, explore diverse styles & formats. Brings passion & productivity to your shoot. Award-winner w/ latest Super/Std.16 Aaton XTR Prod. package. Todd (718) 222-9277; wacass@concentric.net

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Documentary, commercial, narrative experience. Beta SP, Mini DV, Aaton XTR Packages. Comfortable Avid suite (AVR 77). Call Andre for reel: (212) 367-3730.

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ reg/S-16mm Aaton, video-tap, lighting gear & more. Digital video too. Collaborations in features, shorts, docs, music videos & other compelling visions. Kevin Skvorak, reel & rates (718) 782-9179; kevskvk@inx.net

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ Arri SR Super 16 package & 35IIC, w/ over 15 years in the industry. Credits incl. 2nd unit, FX & experimental. Looking for interesting projects. Will travel. Theo (212) 774-4157; pager: (213) 707-6195.

COMPOSER: Creative, productive, and diversified composer will work with you and your budget. Visit my web site for details, music samples, and info on buyout music CDs. Michael Hayes at: (615) 329-2313 x. 2227; www.michaelhayesmusic.com

COMPOSER: Experienced, award-winning Yale conservatory grad writes affordable music in any style that will enhance your project. Save money without compromising creativity. Full service digital recording studio. Free demo CD/initial consultation/rough sketch. Call Joseph Rubenstein; (212) 242-2691; joe56@earthlink.net

COMPOSER: MFA (NYU/Tisch) and extensive experience with theater, dance & Sundance filmmakers. Will work with any budget in styles ranging from classical to drum & bass to African-Hungarian jazz. Low budget services include digital studio & live cello. Contact Raul Rothblatt (212) 254-0155; deblatt@interport.net

COMPOSER Miriam Cutler loves to collaborate with filmmakers—features, docs. Sundance: *Licensed To Kill , Death A Love Story* / Peabody: *The Castro* / POV: *Double Life of Ernesto Gomez* & more (323) 664-1807; mircut@pacificnet.net

COMPOSER: Original music for your film or video project. Credits include NYU film projects and CD. Will work with any budget. Complete digital studio. NYC area. Call Ian O'Brien: (201) 432-4705; iobrien@bellatlantic.net

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COMPOSER: Award-winning, experienced, will creatively score your film/TV/video project in any musical style. Extensive credits include nationally released features, TV dramas, documentaries, animation, on Networks, MTV, Disney, PBS. Columbia MA in composition; full digital studio; affordable. Demo reel available. Elliot Sokolov (212) 721-3218 or Elliotsoko@aol.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ lighting director background. Specialty films my specialty. Can give your film that unique "look." 16mm & 35mm packages avail. Call Charles for reel: (212) 295-7878.

DIGITAL VIDEO—Sony VX100 digital camera & cameraman, Sennheiser ME 66 shotgun mic, pro accessories. Experienced in dance, theater & performance art documentation. $150 a day plus tapes for documentations. Larger projects negotiable. Final Cut Pro digital editing with editor $25 per hour. John Newell (212) 677-6652; johnewell@earthlink.net

DIGITAL VIDEO Videographer/D.P., with Canon XL-1 videocam; prefer documentaries, shorts and less traditional projects; documentation for dance, music and performance. Alan Roth (718) 218-8065; alanroth@mail.com

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Award winning, exp, looking for interesting projects. Credits incl. features, docs & commercials in the U.S., Europe & Israel. Own complete Aaton Super 16 pkg & lights. Call Adam for reel. (212) 932-8255 or (917) 504-7244.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY; Looking for creative projects to lens; features, commercials, shorts, music videos & documentaries. 35 and 16mm packages avail. New York/Boston based, will travel. Call for reel: (781) 545-2609; bkarol@mediaone.net

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for interesting features, shorts, ind. projects, etc. Credits incl. features, commercials, industrials, short films, music videos. Aaton 16/S-16 pkg avail. Abe (718) 263-0010.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Owner 16mm Aaton, plus 35mm non-sync & hand-crank cameras. Experimental background; creative look. Shooting credits incl.: features, shorts, promos, commercials & music videos. New York based, will travel. Carolyn (718) 930-7969.

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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ awards, talent, savvy & experience. Owned Aaton 16mm/Super 16mm pkg., 35mm package available. Call for my reel. Bob (212) 989-7992.

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EDITOR: Award-winning director/editor, whose last film was selected by Cannes, seeks editing projects. Avid available. (212) 352-4476.

EDITOR WITH AVID: Conscientious advocate of the Invisible Cut. Comfy West Village space. AVR77, 144 gigs, Beta, VHS, DV. MC/Visa. Bill G. (212) 243-1343, gcomvid@usa.net

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: Frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

EXPERIENCED CINEMATOGRAPHER with crew & equipment; 16mm & 35mm. Short films & features. Vincent (212) 779-1441.

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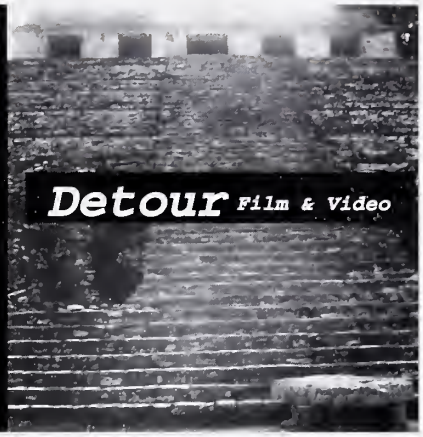
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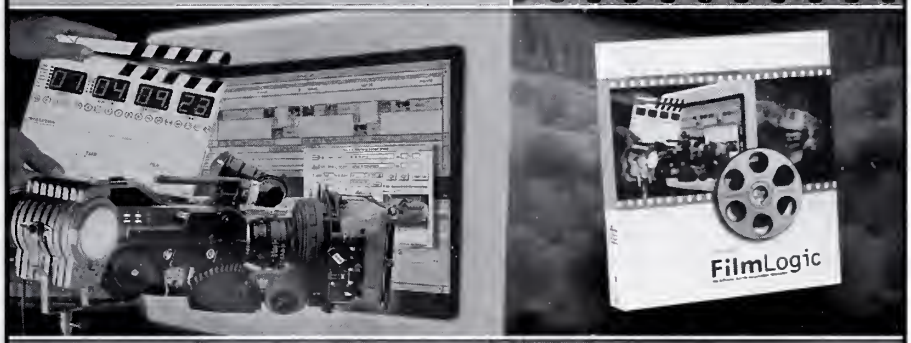
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DP WANTED: Low-budget film, shoot 18 days, summer 2000, Cincinnati/Eastern Kentucky. First-time production, looking for DP excited by Bresson-style shoot: one lens, natural light, non-actors involved. (513) 761-8517; LMa5448000@aol.com

FRESH AIR FUND seeks television production teacher & photography teacher during 9 wk. summer residential camp in Fishkill, NY for NYC teens. Prior teaching exp. req'd. Resumé to Miriam Seidenfeld, 1040 6th Ave., 3rd fl., NY, NY 10018; (800) 367-0003. EOE.

SUITCASE PRODUCTIONS seeking exp. transcribers & camera crews to work on upcoming TV projects. Also seeking general production & development interns. Fax resumés to (212) 647-0940 & send reels to: 307 7th Ave., Ste. 1607, NY, NY 10001.

WELL-ESTABLISHED freelance camera group in NYC seeking professional cameramen and soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

WRITER/DIRECTOR SEEKS other writer/directors to collaborate with (particularly for writing screenplays). Wanted: smart, witty, and creative people. call Ken (212) 979-8978.

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16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., #404, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771, or eves: (847) 541-8488.

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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events require advanced registration and prepayment, unless otherwise noted. Due to space limitations, we will hold all reserved seats until 5 minutes before the event, upon which unclaimed seats will be given to walk-ins. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, AmEx, or Mastercard or mail a check or money order. (Your check must be received one week prior to event to reserve your seat. Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.)

The followings details were being confirmed at presstime. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

April Events

Please note: the AIVF office will be closed April 17-21. We will reopen April 24.

AFTER HOURS

MEMBERS' ORIENTATION & OPEN HOUSE

When: Every 1st Wed. (April 5, May 3)
Library is open from 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Where: Filmmakers Resource Library, at AIVF
Cost: free, no RSVP required.

AIVF offers extended Resource Library hours once a month for members as well as the general public. Our library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories (*The Hollywood Creative Directory*, *The CPB Directory*, *The Blu-Book*, *NYPG*) to film history and biographies, along with back issues of trade magazines (*Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter*) and film publications (*Res*, *Filmmaker*, *MovieMaker*, along with 20 years of *The Independent*). After Hours is also the perfect time to pick up the latest version of the AIVF Member Benefits list, or ask questions about all that membership gets you.

AIVF visits LA

When: Mon. April 17; time and location tba

AIVF invites our Los Angeles colleagues (and those visiting for the LAIFF) to join us for an informal reception celebrating the Los Angeles issue of *The Independent*—and kicking off a new LA Salon! For info on time and place, visit www.aivf.org or call (323) 871-8554.

AIVF AT PS 2000

AIVF CO-PRESENTS PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON THE CREATIVE PROCESS & SHORTS DISTRIBUTION

When: Sat. April 22, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Where: Tribeca Film Center, 375 Greenwich St.
Cost: Free to all. No reservations necessary, but space is limited!



AIVF proudly co-sponsors PS 2000, the New York festival that brings shorts back to the big screen in style. The fifth edition of this New York-based festival brings a balance of festival favorites, diamond-in-the-rough discoveries, and tragically neglected oddities, emphasizing craftsmanship and community over competition. Check them out every Monday in April at Anthology Film Archives. For more info: www.ps00.com

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: Digital Video, & Why I Had To Remind Myself That Film Still Exists

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. *Digitial video and applications are truly opening doors for filmmakers. But is the overall quality of indie film slumping as a result, and is it really necessary to write off film for your guerilla projects? Join our discussion with directors & cinemaographers on weighing format options and on making the best aesthetic choices for your film in this panel on craft and technologies.*

Fine Tuning Shorts Distribution:

2-3:30 p.m. *Get in on this panel with distributors from cable, video, and internet outlets on what to expect from your short film distribution deal–including what to look for in contracts, and how to work with your distributor to maximize viewer potential.*

Details posted at www.aivf.org.

MEET & GREET

INTERNET DISTRIBUTORS

When: Tues. April 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free to members/$10 general public
RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x. 301

Get ahead on the dot-comming of distribution by meeting some of the internet's reputable distributors. How do you choose your internet distributor out of the mish-mash of opportunities? What should you look out for in contracts, and what should you expect to get out of online viewership and ancillary markets? Find out in a discussion moderated by Rolf Gibbs, which will include reps from shortbuzz.com, undergroundfilm.com, and others.

MEET YOUR MAKER

AMY TALKINGTON'S *SECOND SKIN*

When: Tues., April 11, 7-9 p.m.
Cost: $10 (AIVF members only)
RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 (RSVP required—space extremely limited)

Amy Talkington's short films, *Second Skin* (1998) and *Number One Fan* (1997) have been selected for numerous distinguished festivals, including the 1999 Sundance Film Festival, and


From Amy Talkington's *Second Skin*

Amy Talkington, director>

have been acquired numerous accolades including the New Line Cinema Award for Best Director. *Second Skin* won the New Line Cinema Development Award and was acquired by HBO and various channels in Europe including Canal Plus. Amy was recently selected as one of Filmmaker Magazine's "25 New Indie Faces to Watch."

Second Skin, a quirky tale of unlikely love, follows a gawky pet store clerk, a mesmerizing customer, and a six foot snake on their bus ride through suburban hell to a moment of freedom.

Meet Your Maker is a series of peer workshops allowing filmmakers to share resources and learn from one another's approaches to film- and videomaking.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x 224 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.

See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 "N" Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, engnetwork@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, www.mifs.org/salon or (414) 276-8563

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668 or dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; www.members.tripod.com/rochaivf/index.html

San Diego, CA:
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Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

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The featured artist shares her/his business and creative strategies through all stages of completing a specific project. Topics include: fundraising, grant writing, budgeting, scheduling, shooting, post, and distribution approaches and alternatives, all within the constraints of a small budget.

Coming in May

REGIONAL PROGRAM
MAESTRO

AIVF and the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC) kick off our Media Arts Environmental Scanning Tour at the end of April! MAESTRO brings representatives of AIVF and NAMAC to regional media arts communities to partner with local organizations for a three-day celebration of local resources. Events in each city include screenings, studio visits, informal dialogues, and peer-led technical workshops for both individual artists and media arts organizations. Also, in each city Grantmakers in Film and Electronic Media (GFEM) will co-present a panel bringing together artists, media arts organizations, and local funders to address the challenges facing media funding in the 21st century.

Through MAESTRO, our national organizations will get a vivid snapshot of the unique qualities of various media arts communities, while the program will offer an occasion for communities to celebrate their native resources and strengthen partnerships on a local level.

Our visits to Los Angeles, Buffalo, and New Orleans represent a pilot project, so be sure to let us know if you would like us to bring MAESTRO to your community in the future!

The following is just a rough outline of events, subject to change. RSVPs required. For more info: www.aivf.org; maestro@aivf.org; Katie Cokinos at (212) 807-1400 x 232; or the local hotlines listed below.

Los Angeles, Sunday April 30-Tuesday May 2
hotline: (323) 871-8554
April 30: *filmmakers' coffee, public exhibition*
May 1: *open studios, public exhibition*
May 2: *workshops, GFEM panel presentation at USC Annenberg Center followed by reception & video exhibit*

Buffalo, Friday, May 12 - Sunday, May 14
hotline: (212) 807-1400 x 244
May 12: *open studios, public exhibition*
May 13: *workshops, GFEM panel, reception, exhibition*
May 14: *filmmakers' breakfast*

New Orleans, Friday, May 19 - Sunday, May 21
hotline: New Orleans Film Society (504)523-3818
May 19: *open studios, Bay Area filmmaker Danny Plotnick screens work at Zeitgeist Theater*
May 20: *artists' workshop: Self distribution, including broadband opportunities; organizations' workshop: Fundraising; GFEM panel; reception; public exhibition of work from the Southern Region*
May 21: *filmmakers' breakfast*

HOW TO PITCH TO PBS

Get in on must-have tips and pointers for pitching your project to PBS or any other broadcast outlet. Details to come.

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AIVF members may attend specific events at discounted prices. Please show membership card at box office. The Walter Reade Theatre is located at Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th Street at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

The Art of Film Titles: April 7 & 8
Blame Canada: April 14-27

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Back Issues from '99

JANUARY/FEBRUARY



• The Digital Revolution: Why Hal Hartley, Todd Verow & others made the switch
• Dogma 99: U.S. indies write their own vows
• The pros and cons of shooting in B&W
• FAQs: Distributor—Artisan Entertainment; Funder—The Jerome Foundation

APRIL



• How to pick a producer: Pointers from indie veteran Gill Holland
• Deadling with casting directors who demand producer credits
• Has the artsyplex boom housebroken indie film?
•FAQs: Distributor—Stratosphere; Funder—Creative Capital Foundation

JULY
Experimental Media



• Behind *The Blair Witch Project*
• Exhibition opportunities—and audiences—for experimental media
• An interview with Leighton Pierce
• FAQs: Distributor—V Tape; Funder—Experimental Television Center

OCTOBER
Documentary Today



•Made in Milwaukeewood: Chris Smith's *American Movie*
• A&E's growing partnership with independent documentarians
• Archival footage research goes hi-tech
• FAQs: Distributor—Univ. of California Extension Center; Funder—Soros Fund

To order back issues, contact **info@aivf.org** or send $5/issue (plus $1.50 s&h for a single copy; $1 for each additional copy) to:

The Independent—Back Issues Orders
304 Hudson St. (6th fl.), New York, NY 10013.

MINUTES
FIVF/AIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The winter AIVF board meeting was held in New York City January 8-9, with Robb Moss (co-chair), Diane Markrow (co-chair), Jim McKay (vice president & secretary), Robert Richter (treasurer), Doug Block, DeeDee Halleck, Lee Lew-Lee, Valerie Soe, Cynthia Lopez (FIVF), Elizabeth Peters (ex-officio) and AIVF/FIVF staff attending. Absent were Vivian Kleiman, Graham Leggat and Richard Linklater.

The current board and staff welcomed new members, Block and Halleck. (Kleiman was unable to attend.) The executive committee presented their recommendations for the new board officer slate: Markrow as president, Moss as vice president, McKay as chair, Soe as secretary, Richter to continue on as treasurer and Peters to continue on as executive director. All were in favor.

Richter moved to re-appoint James Schamus, Ruby Lerner and Cynthia Lopez to the FIVF board. Halleck abstained. All others were in favor.

The minutes of the fall meeting were approved. The treasurer's report indicated that net income to date is $16,000, which is $41,000 ahead of where we were at this time last year.

The board discussed policy regarding board member alternates. In 1998 a change in the alternate policy was instituted which attached the slate of alternates to the term for which they were elected. Block motioned to return to the previous policy which administered the acquisition of new alternates with each election year. All were in favor.

Staff report highlights: Michelle Coe reported on the success of "After Hours," a new program which keeps AIVF's filmmaker's resource library open after work hours one evening each month. Coe also reported that she would like to develop a way to share our New York events with our constituency in the rest of the nation. She would like to encourage salon leaders to conduct similar events in their own communities. Thomson discussed a new column in celebration of the AIVF/FIVF anniversary, "In Retrospect," which will revisit material from the Independent magazine's history.

Guest speaker Michelle Byrd of the Independent Feature Project made an informal presentation to the board and staff,

Committee report highlights:

25th Anniversary: McKay reported a decision to hold the event in November. Discussion of the AIVF Hall of Valor ensued. The Board decided to solicit nominations from the membership. A panel of board members will select the final 25 inductees. Soe, Richter, Block, Halleck, Lee, Leggat, and Linklater will form the committee.

Planning: the board retreat will be held April 7-9 in Austin, Texas.

Advocacy: Halleck will work with Peters to reinvigorate the committee and seek funding.

Development: Peters reported on grants from the MacArthur and LEF Foundations.

Membership: the committee developed a list of goals. Block will compile a listserve for schools.

Elections: the board election timeline will be set for next year.

Technology: Block solicited feedback on the new website prototype to forward to Sanchez.

Regional: the committee will work to develop trade discounts and collaborative programs.

An abbreviated board meeting will be held April 7 in Austin Texas.

The Annual Members' Meeting will be held June 16 in New York City, followed by the next board meeting June 17-18.

Full minutes are available at www.aivf.org.

CONTINUED FROM P. 72

don't necessarily 'talk' to one another."

Teri Robinson, 1990

[*Premiere* editor Peter] Biskind concludes that an injection of funds would not be enough to resolve the problems threatening the continued existence of Sundance. . . But while Sundance officials are publicly optimistic about the institute's future, it remains to be seen whether Sundance will continue the same level of commitment to independent film that guided its first 10 years."

Clare O'Shea, 1991

"The National Endowment for the Arts has been called upon to apply 'general standards of decency' in assessing grantees work, and local PBS stations have eschewed queer work based on an abstract notion of 'community values.' "

Catherine Saalfield, 1992

"Is the new independent women's cinema a feminist cinema? The answer in is the eye of the beholder. If the word 'feminism' has been opened up by women who challenged the white, middle-class focus of the early feminist movcement, it has also be stigmatized by a reactionary conservative backlash...Today's women directors are bringing a range of feminist issues to the screen. Moreover, their films negotiate feminist insights alongside experiences of class, race, and sexuality—just as real women do."

Laurie Ouellette, 1995

"Distribution methods have traditionally been well-guarded secrets, and until recently few filmmakers felt confident enough to attempt it themselves. But following the self-distribution success of Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky with *Brother's Keeper*, more independent films are going it alone, and more filmmakers are sharing notes on how to tackle this uncharted territory."

Suzanne Meyers, 1997

"Slamdance seems to have come of age this year. . . [and] is turning out to be like the fringe events at major performance festivals like Edinburgh and Spoleto."

Ruby Lerner, 1998

"Though placed in [Sundance's] relatively low-profile Midnight Films category, *The Blair Witch Project* hit a homerun with audiences and had the honor of being the first acquisition of the festival (an Artisan pick up)."

Patricia Thomson, 1999

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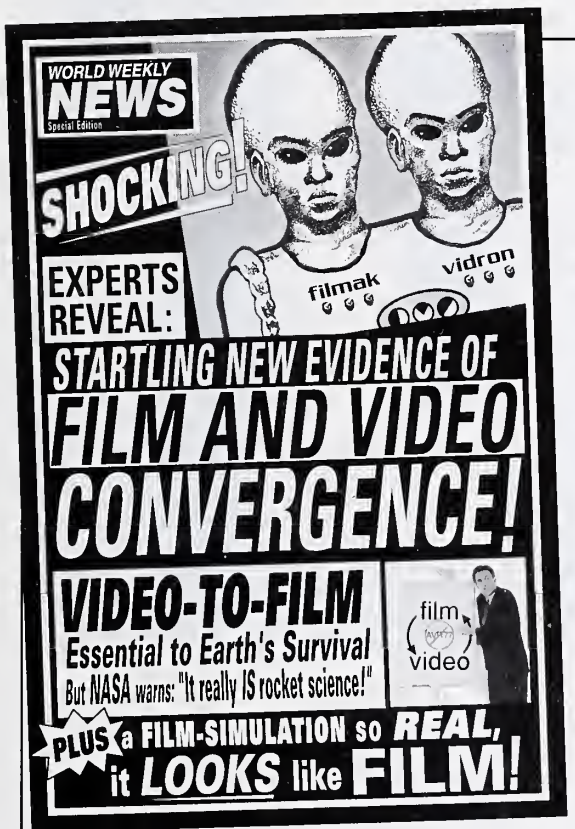
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This column commemorates the 25th anniversary of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the April issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.

"After all, it is 1979. Sexism in the media has been around as a topic for at least a decade. If we haven't something new to contribute in terms of abolishing the still rampant sexism in the media, why are we devoting time and energy to plan or attend such a meeting?"

Ardele Lister, in reference to an AIVF/Women Make Movies panel, 1979

"The next step in this process, I propose, is a view and interpretation of American issues based on the 'minority' experience but treating issues, trends, and phoenomenon not necessarily directly connected to 'minority' life. It is this approach that has yet to be seen in programming content."

St. Clair Bourne, 1980

"As we shake off the sleep and rub our eyes, it becomes clear that the volatile issue of film aesthetics vs. tape aesthetics has dissipated in the night. For today, images recorded on 1" videotape are as likely to wind up on a projection screen as those photographed in 16mm are to be displayed on a television reciever."

David Leitner, 1982

"I don't think we are making much headway. We don't have the capital resources to make anything go. [American] Indians are the poorest of the lot, of all the minorities in this country, and it takes capital to make this electronic thing go. I feel I have a very heavy responsibility, being one of the handful of working Indian producers in the country."

Chris Spotted Eagle, 1983



"So you open out of town and do well; but then when you try to sell the film to an exhibitor he'll say, 'What did it do in New York?' You say, 'It did well in Seattle.' He'll say, 'I don't care about that. What are the [New York] reviews like?' It's a very sad state. It may sound cynical, but the biggest sheep are the intellectuals. The general audience will look at a poster and say, 'Hey, this looks good, let's go in and see it.' The supposed 'thinking' people will say, 'What did the *Times* say?' "

Ben Barenholtz, 1984

"The [San Francisco Lesbian and Gay] film festival is desperate for films by women—'a good lesbian feature is a real coup,' says [former festival judge] Liz Stevens. [Festival director] Michael Lumpkin says he would like to see more U.S. features. But many filmmakers worry that screening at a gay/lesbian festival will 'ghettoize' their film."

Fran Christie, 1985

"If you tell a story where the listener can see both the process of storytelling as well as the story itself, the whole thing is much more exciting and open."

Jill Godmilow, 1986

"At this historical moment we still need to search out and be reminded of suppressed histories and struggles; prostitutes, housewives, women of color, lesbians, third world people, the aging, working women. The method of representing these histories is a separate and equally important issue. I see no reason why a single film can't use many different methods."

Yvonne Rainer, 1987

"One other note of extreme caution before you invest in S-VHS: very soon (maybe in five years) video will be totally digital, and then everything, every format, will change. But that's life with video."

Bart Weiss, 1988

"To get their venture [Zeitgeist Films] on its feet, [Emily] Russo and [Nancy] Gerstman financed it out of their own pockets, with very little capital. They intend to compete with more established distributors by keeping their costs low. The staff, for instance, is composed of only the two partners."

Lorna Johnson, 1989

"The newer PC-based editing systems must hurdle another obstacle that plagues all emerging technology—the development of standards. Currently, most systems are proprietary and

CONTINUED ON P. 71

FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, and information services. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $105,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

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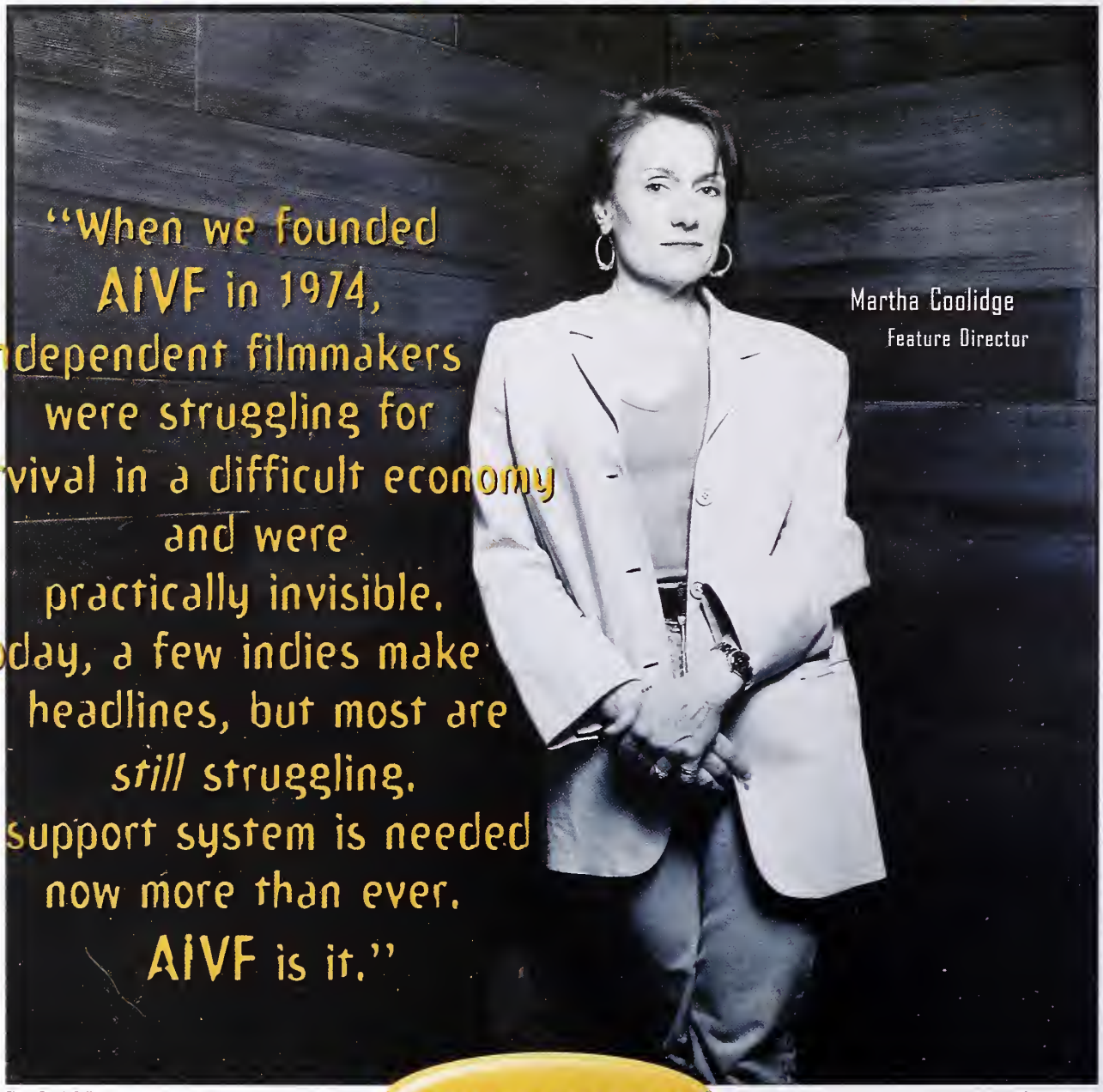


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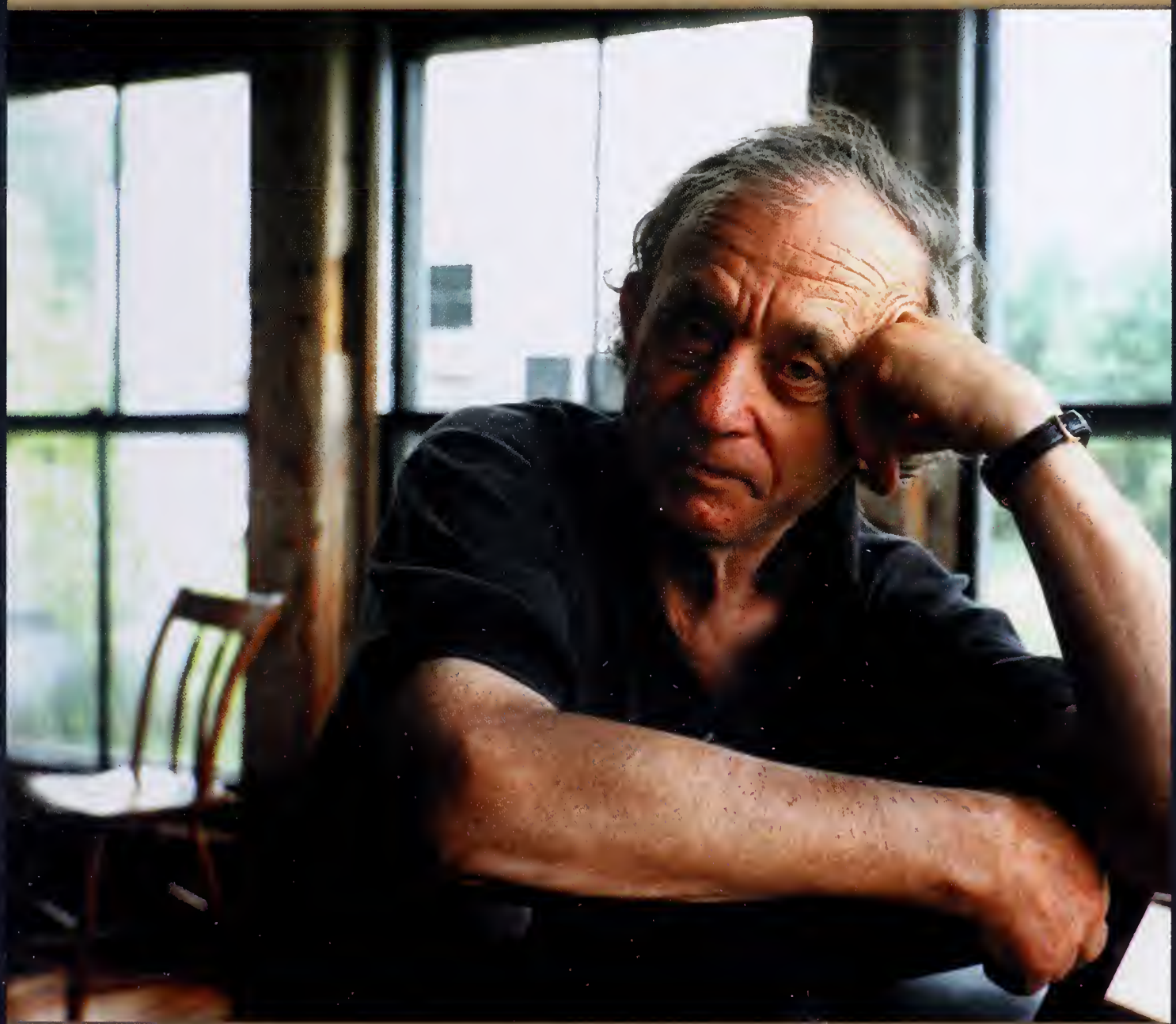
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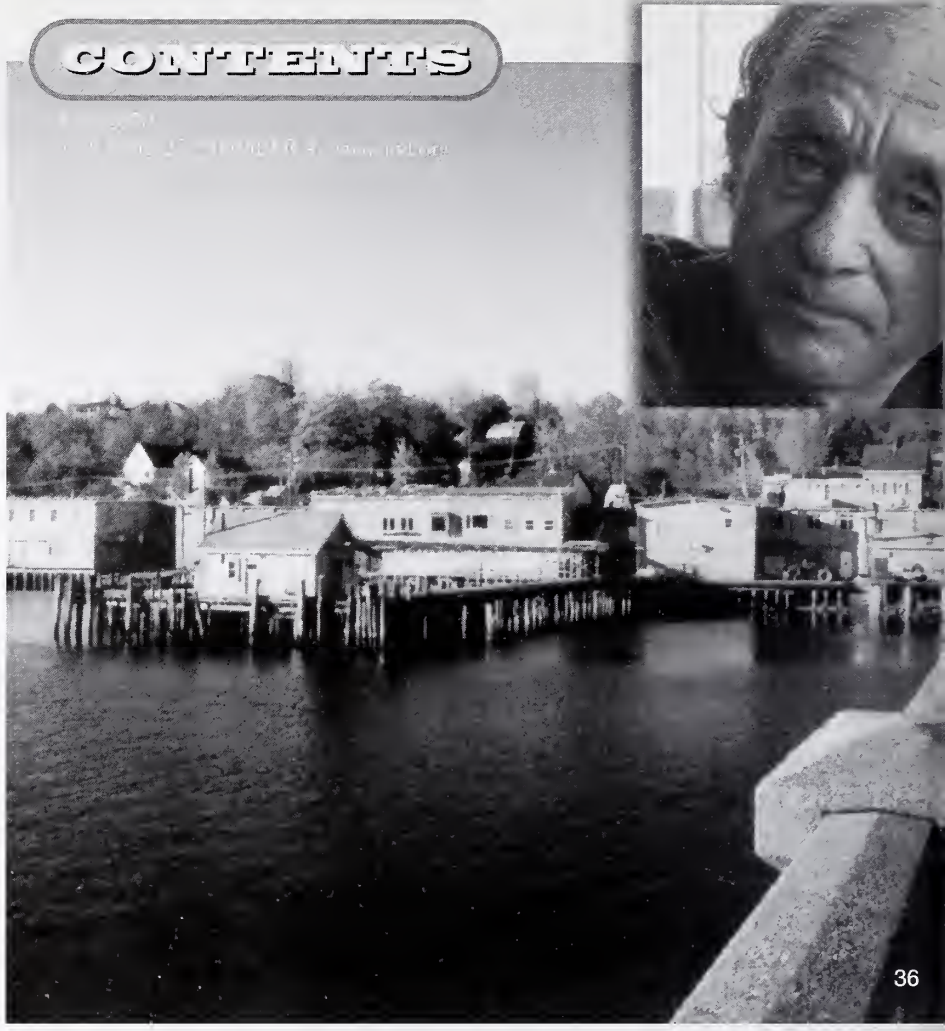
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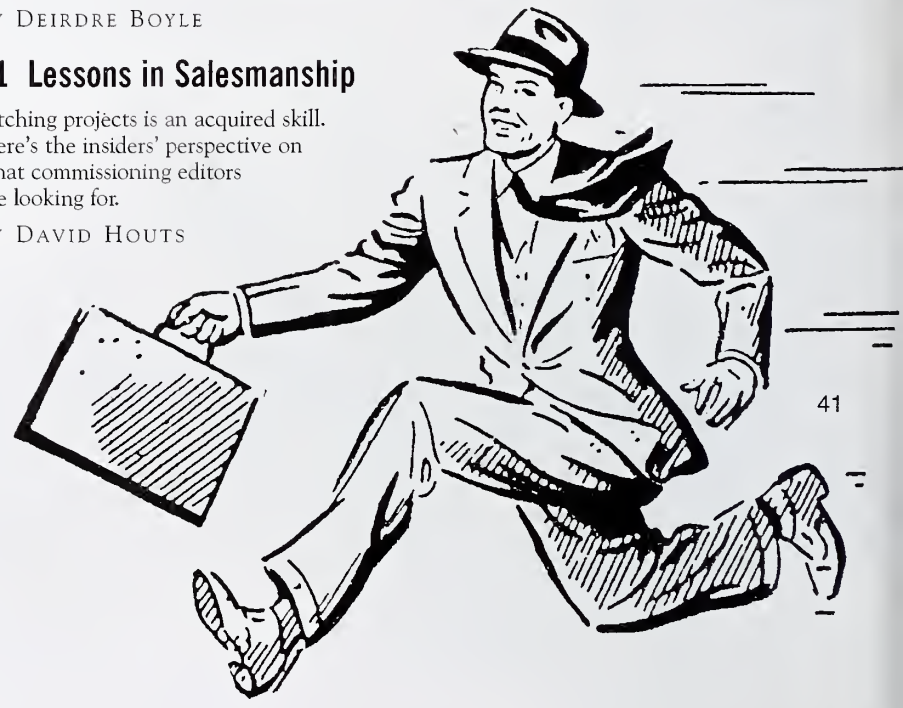
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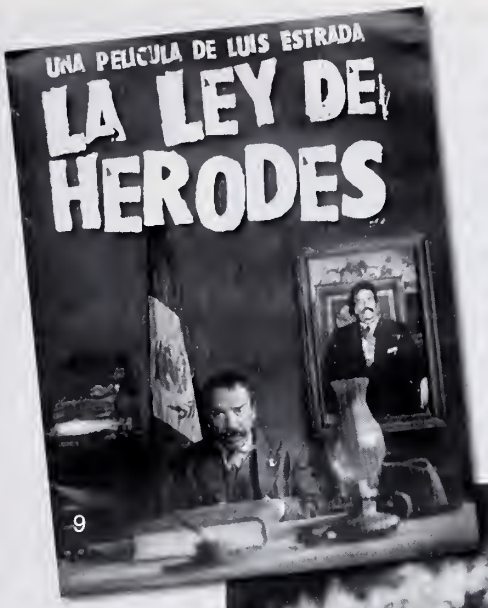
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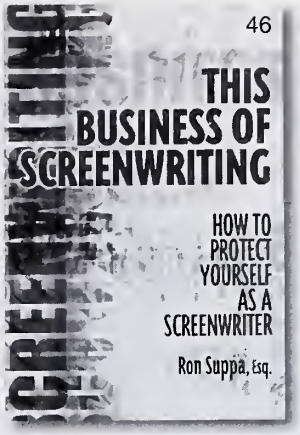
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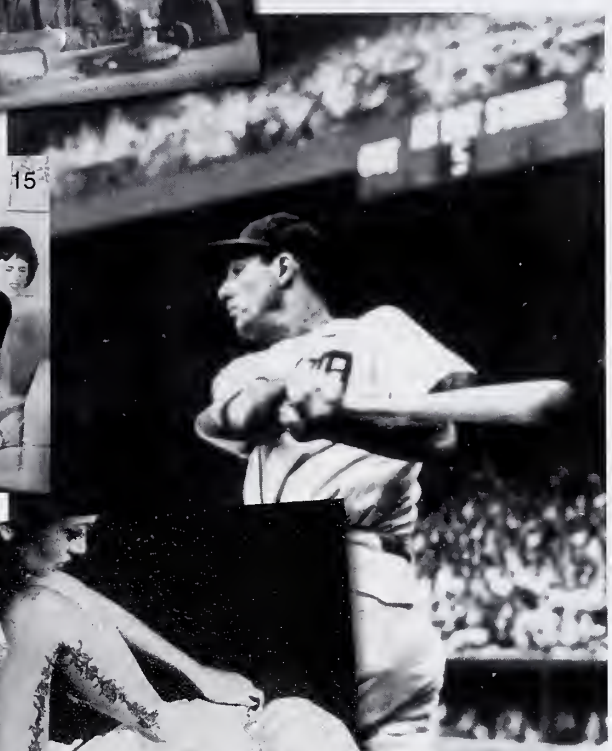
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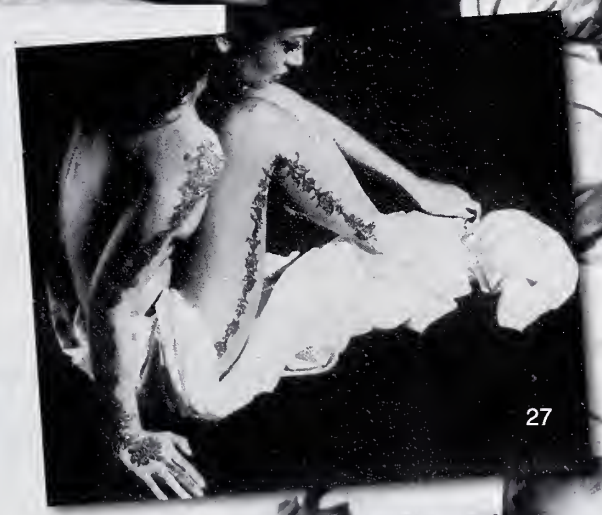
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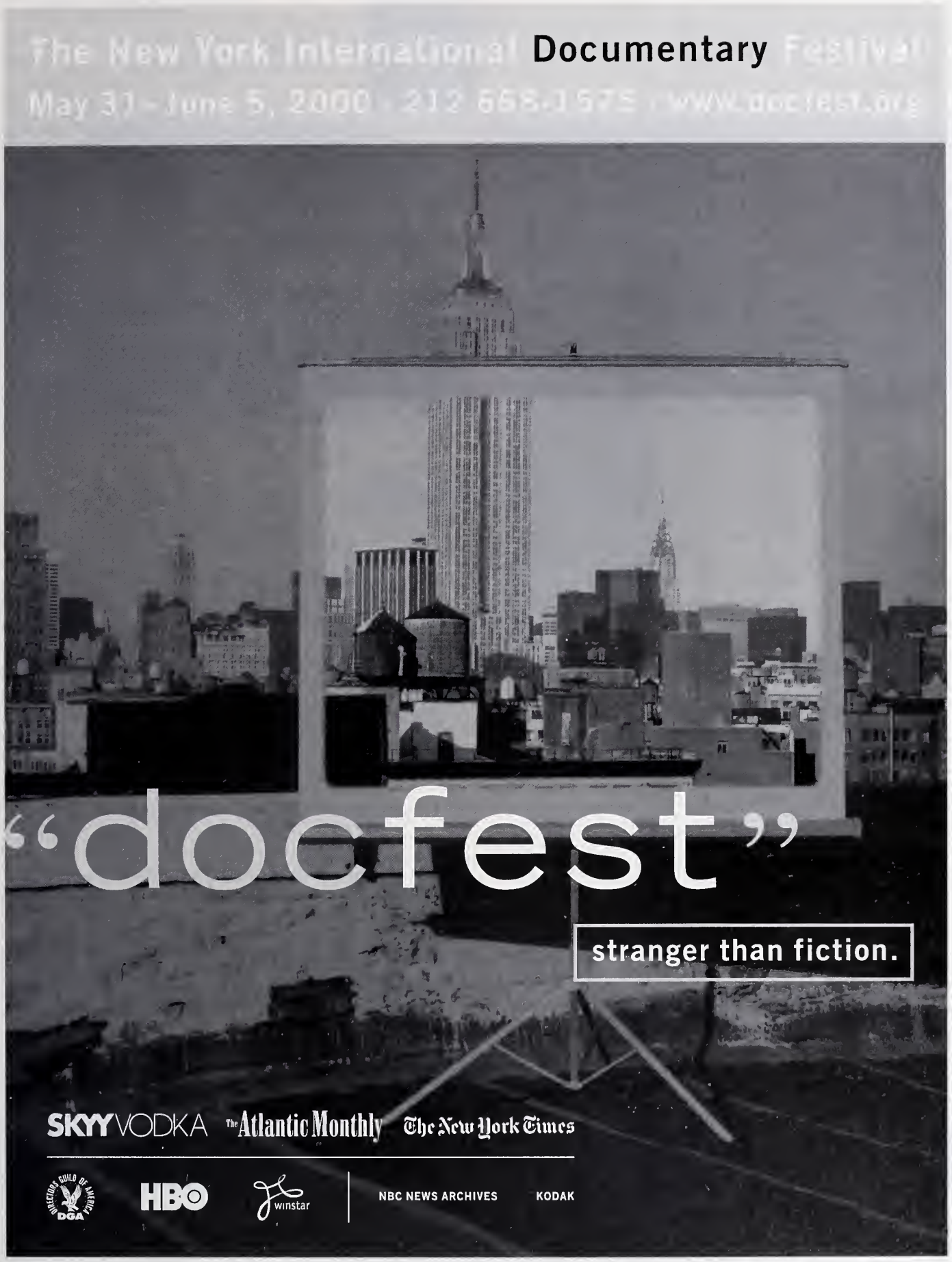
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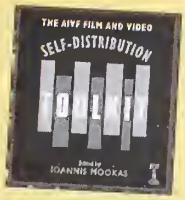
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The mission of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is to increase the creative and professional opportunities for independent video and filmmakers and to ensure and enhance the growth of independent media by providing services, advocacy, and information. In these ways, AIVF promotes diversity and democracy in the communication and expression of ideas and images.

AIVF Founding Principles:

1 The Association is an organization of and for independent video- and filmmakers.

2 The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job, that it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.

3 The Association works, through the combined efforts of the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5 The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

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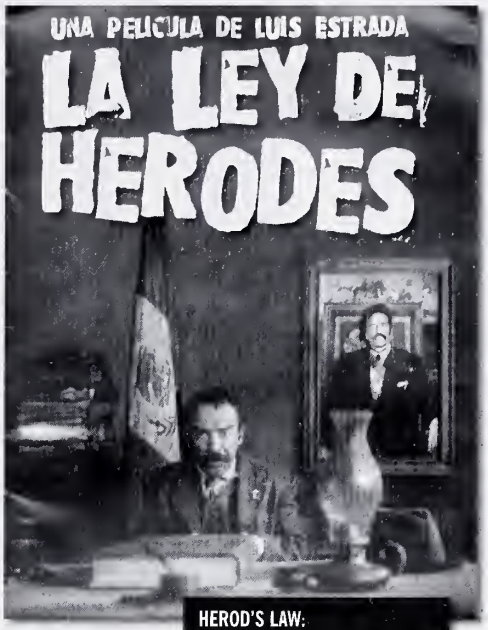
Herod's Law *ruffles feathers, but thwarts censorship efforts by Mexico's political elite.*

BY BERNARDO RUIZ

CENSORSHIP, LONG AN UNFORTUNATE REALITY IN the Latin American film scene, recently received an unprecedented blow from a small and unlikely film. Luis Estrada's feature, *Herod's Law*, successfully battled the forces of state censorship in Mexico and lived to tell the tale.

It all started last December when Estrada's worst fears were confirmed as his film was abruptly pulled from theaters after only a week of exhibition—violating Mexican federal law. (The legislation stipulates that all "nationally produced" films be exhibited at least 15 days within the country.) The film, which depicts corruption in the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), had been released prematurely by the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE) with no press or promotion, and most importantly without Estrada's permission. In an election year in which the PRI is seeking its twelfth straight win, the film gave officials cause for worry, explains Estrada. "I know that there were top-ranking government officials who were uncomfortable, to say the least, with this film," he says. "I think it was because they saw themselves reflected in the mirrors I set up in the film and the image that they saw reflected back bothered them."

Herod's Law, which has caused one of the biggest scandals in recent Mexican film history, tells the story of a petty official's rise to power through corruption and bribery in 1940s Mexico. The film had already made a stir at the Fourth Annual French Film Festival in Acapulco, Mexico, when officials from the IMCINE, which owned 60% of the film's rights, had cancelled the screening. It seemed the IMCINE was getting cold feet about exhibiting Estrada's film, since this was shaping up to become a hotly contested election year, though the government organization had already backed the film's production. Festival participants, audience members, critics, and a vocal French delegation had cried foul until the film was finally shown. Now, it seemed, the IMCINE was trying to bury the film in obscurity by releasing it in two small Mexico City theaters without promotion to the press.



HEROD'S LAW:
Beware who pays the piper.

Ironically, Estrada had worked with IMCINE for the past 10 years. He said that he had maintained a good working relationship with the institute throughout the decade, including during the production of *Herod's Law*. But somewhere, someone along the line must have panicked, Estrada admits. "It could not have ended worse," says Estrada. "My ability to make films with the institute in the future will depend—though it sounds a little pretentious to say so—on the future of this country and its transition to democracy."

In a shaken economy, Mexican filmmakers still depend largely on government funding to finance their films. Government funding, however, can be a mixed blessing—as is the case with *Herod's Law*—since funding can also mean bureaucratic and political battles over content. And though many critics have pointed to a resurgence in contemporary Mexican cinema, dependence on the IMCINE is still limiting for independently minded filmmakers. "I don't think that a true resurgence of Mexican cinema exists," says Estrada who has directed three other features. "Every year, fewer and fewer films are made here."

But in an unusual turn of events, *Herod's Law*, which had attracted a lot of attention, has taken on a life of its own. The Mexican and international press, as well as the larger film community, picked up the story and letters of protest were published worldwide. Eduardo Amerena, head of IMCINE, was quickly dismissed for what a senior official terms "erratic behavior." The actress, María Rojo, now a member of the lower house of Congress, called for a congressional investigation into the film's censorship. Rojo, star of *Danzón* and long a staple of Mexican cinema, brokered a deal between Estrada and IMCINE in which Estrada, in an unprecedented move, was given complete rights to the film. The deal worked like this: the total budget for the film was $1.4 million and the Mexican Film Institute had invested $900,000. Estrada's company, Bandidos Films, had invested the remaining $500,000 (made up of cash and in-kind agreements for salaries and services). The new agreement has Estrada and his company promising to repay the Mexican Film Institute its contribution through the commercial sale of the film. "Without María Rojo's participation, it would have been impossible to resolve the conflict," explains Estrada "Like the title of one of her films, she is Maria of My Heart."

"Censorship no longer exists in the political lexicon of Mexico," declares Rafael Tovar y Teresa, head of Mexico's National Culture and Arts Council, who had been representing the government side in the negotiations. It seemed he and the IMCINE thought it best to put the whole incident behind them.

Not too long after the deal, Artecinema, the largest independent film distributor in Mexico, agreed to distribute the film. *Herod's Law* has been released in Mexico on 200 screens—not a huge release by U.S. standards but one which, for Mexico, represents a recent record. "It was a triumph against censorship," Estrada told the Mexican press. The film also screened at Sundance and at New Directors, New Films this year.

Though Estrada is reluctant to say how the publicity has affected the film's distribution, the recent controversy could just make *Herod's Law* one of the highest-grossing Mexican films in recent history. The film's David and Goliath story illustrates how even an underdog film like *Herod's Law* can stir up international support. It should also drive home the point to Mexican powers that be that the days of unchallenged state censorship are a thing of the past.

Bernardo Ruiz is an independent filmmaker and journalist. He edits the bilingual journal The Broadcast/La Hoja Grande *[www.quintaraza.com]*

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PITTSBURGH PIRATES

WQEX escapes transfer to religious broadcaster, but FCC sets dangerous precedent.

JUST WHEN THE STRUGGLE TO KEEP PUBLIC broadcasting channels out of the hands of rapacious commercial interests seemed to be gaining a solid foothold, an FCC decision may have taken the proverbial two steps backward. A seven-year campaign to win more community input into programming at Pittsburgh public TV station WQEX, the daughter station of the city's WQED, won a qualified victory last December: the unloading of WQEX onto a religious broadcaster was averted, despite pressure from White House hopeful John McCain. The decision has left a sour taste in the mouths of all parties to the deal and, more dangerously, may make it easier for commercial religious broadcasters to occupy educational channel space.

At the heart of the matter was the decision by WQED to sell secondary station WQEX to an evangelical local broadcaster, Cornerstone. WQEX primarily simulcasts WQED's shows although, says Charlie Humphrey, executive director of Pittsburgh Filmmakers, "WQEX could become a linchpin for independent media distribution. What's being lost right now is opportunity." For years, a coalition representing civil rights, labor, gay, lesbian, and other community activists had battled WQED over WQEX's schedule, which had featured low-budget stuff, including "classic TV" (*The Honeymooners*, *Lassie*). But occasionally, thanks to coalition pressure, the station showcased underrepresented perspectives, such as labor (the locally produced *Labor's Corner*) and human rights (syndicated series *Rights and Wrongs*).

Then in 1996, in the aftermath of a financial scandal, WQED tried to sell off WQEX. The market for licenses was red hot, with mini-networks proliferating. The budding network of family-oriented stations, Paxson Communications, which was among the high-profile supporters of McCain's White House bid, was ready to pay millions. Some public broadcasters with second channels saw them as assets they could sell, to capitalize the expanded digital capacity they had just won on their main channels. WQED hoped to raise millions with the sale.

But WQEX has an educational license, like all other public TV stations, and the FCC refused to change that. So WQED directors tried another approach. A smalltime local broadcaster, the evangelical Christian Cornerstone, would sell its commercial license to Paxson for $35 million. Then it would take over WQEX's educational license, splitting the profits from the sale with WQED.

The Alliance for Progressive Action and the QED Accountability Project were outraged by the prospect of seeing a potential local resource spun into gold for WQED's coffers. They asked the FCC to deny the transfer, and demanded to know more about Cornerstone's programming plans. Cornerstone submitted a proposed schedule that included an anti-evolution science program, Christian cartoons, and *This Week in Bible Prophecy*.

Last December, goaded into action by peremptory letters from Senator McCain (chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee), urging the FCC to "act immediately," the commission finally agreed to the three-way swap. It also, however, reminded Cornerstone that it would now be an educational broadcaster. To clarify its meaning and offer "additional guidance," it stated that more than half the programming "must have as its primary purpose service to the educational, instructional, or cultural needs of the community," and noted that sermonizing would not count as educational. That was enough to make Cornerstone back out of the deal.

Jerry Starr, head of Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting and author of *Air Wars*, which details the WQEX conflict's history, claimed victory for citizens' groups. But the decision riled trade group National Religious Broadcasters, which quickly charged that the FCC was discriminating against religious broadcasters, some 15 of which currently hold educational TV licenses. Thousands of letters flooded the FCC from Christian broadcasters and viewers. Ohio Representative Mike Oxley, who reportedly is eyeing a seat on the House Telecom Subcommittee, quickly sponsored a high-visibility bill, which 100 other Representatives co-sponsored, calling for the FCC to retract its "additional guidance" requirement.

Within a month, the FCC caved in and revoked its "additional guidance" condition, without letting the parties to the proceedings comment on it. The one dissenter was Commissioner Gloria Tristani, who has often shown stalwart independence from political pressure. "This is a sad and shameful day for the FCC," she says. This was no persecution, she pointed out; religious broadcasters could say whatever they wanted on commercial channels. As for an "anti-religion" bias, "I reject and resent this type of attack, reminiscent of a witch hunt." Government endorsement of sectarian messages sent a powerful message of exclusion to non-believers: "The freedom to believe, and the freedom to believe in nothing at all, is one of our most precious freedoms." She even accused her fellow commissioners of cowardice, following an FCC tradition of avoiding the issue: "Now, having stuck their head out of their foxhole and drawing fire, the majority is burrowing back in as quickly and deeply as they can."



From Tony Buba's *Struggles in Steel*, aired on WQEX.

Pittsburgh community activists have asked the FCC to reconsider its license renewal for WQEX, given that it's still just simulcasting. But Oxley's legislation was still with the House subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade, and Consumer Protection at presstime, and religious broadcasters are now the ones trumpeting victory.

Tony Buba, whose *Struggles in Steel* recently won a Columbia University-DuPont Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism, would like to get to the next step: "We need to get the station for the community. With today's technological explosion, this spectrum is incredibly valuable." But today, WQED holds the license. The upshot of WQED's dealmaking so far has not only been the shaming of the FCC and the continuing lack of program diversity for Pittsburghers, but a highly visible hollowing out of criteria for public broadcasting.

PAT AUFDERHEIDE

Pat Aufderheide, a professor of communications at American University, has recently published The Daily Planet: A Critic on the Capitalist Culture Beat



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FIRST RITES:
A 'Take-Home' Film Festival

WHILE THE ARMY OF DOT-COMS WAGED BATTLE for their share of the spotlight at Sundance this year, all hailing the great future of online distribution, one small booth stood quietly on the sidelines, offering a concept that at first glance seemed strangely archaic. The company is called First Rites, and the idea is so simple it may well be a stroke of genius—a year-round, monthly film festival, held right in the living rooms of every major city in America (and many of the smaller ones, too) via Hollywood Video stores.



Taking its lead from Australia, First Rites puts indie films like L. Alan Frasier's *Next Time* into video stores.

The model is based on a successful plan, conceived by an Australian media company called Tribe, that promotes local indie filmmakers in video stores in Australia through an ongoing 'take-home film festival.' Last year Tribe approached a small L.A.-based production company called The Asylum with the idea of starting an American counterpart, and thus First Rites was born.

"There's no Internet business right now for feature films," Sherri Strain of First Rites declares, ironically in the midst of a major interactive media exhibit at Sundance, in a darkened room full of computer terminals whizzing with high speed Internet access and splashy graphics. She softens her heresy somewhat by conceding, "There will be—when video-on-demand is up and running, and you punch in on your TV that you want to see *The Sound of Music*, and it pops right up. Then the world will change for all of us. But the reality is that the technology and the infrastructure aren't there yet. I'm living in the year Now—where people still go to the video store and pick up movies."

Indeed, it's sometimes hard to remember amidst all the hype how small a percentage of the population both festivals and broadband actually reach. The vast majority of film viewers have not, and likely never will, make it to a film festival, where dozens of exceptional films every year make their first and only screenings. Furthermore, filmmakers seeking to distribute their work on the web are finding it difficult to get people to watch their films, and even more difficult to make a profit from it.

With that in mind, Hollywood Video, the second-largest video rental store in America, was sufficiently convinced of the consumer demand for indie films that they agreed to seriously invest their shelf space and marketing efforts into First Rites. In many ways, the concept functions much like a traditional film festival, but with a Chinese take-out twist. A filmmaker submits his or her work to a review panel, which then selects six films a month to be presented on videostore shelves. First Rites options full rights to the film for a period of six months (the shelf life of each selection), then reverts the rights back to the filmmaker thereafter. In the meantime, the filmmaker shares in half the revenue generated by rentals (after the film has cleared the hurdle of one rental in every major city). The rental fee is the same as other titles in the store and filmmakers receive checks every quarter.

Since its premiere in January, First Rites has thus far concentrated on feature films, but soon plans to expand into shorts and animation, as well. Steve Taylor, an L.A.-based filmmaker whose directorial debut *Social Intercourse* was picked up by First Rites, says the experience has been nothing but positive. A comedy about a cyber-geek getting over the loss of his girlfriend, *Social Intercourse* had a total budget of $15,000, was shot on 16mm, and transferred to video. So far, it's First Rite's most popular title, but Taylor says the film might've very easily been sitting in his closet right now, collecting dust. "When I finished *Social Intercourse* in 1998, I sent it out to every festival in the world," he recalls. "At the time, no one was looking at anything [that was finished] on video. Sundance cashed my [submission fee] check, and I didn't even get a rejection letter. I thought I had made the worst film of all time." Taylor says the film eventually made it into the Hermosa Beach film festival, where producer Roger Avery (*Pulp Fiction*) was on the jury panel and demanded that Taylor receive an award, or he would walk out. From there, he got into the Savannah Film Festival and then was accepted to First Rites.

Although Hollywood Video is doing its part in promoting the First Rites within stores, just as Blockbuster does with its 'Sundance Section,' Taylor attributes much of the film's rental popularity to his own marketing efforts. "The key art is very important," he says. "The filmmaker is responsible for promotion materials like posters, and when it's a film no one's heard of, it's going to be much more vital." He has yet to receive his first royalty check, but says he'd be happy to just begin recouping his expenses. "The most important thing is to know that people are out there watching your film."

Strain says the submission process works just like a traditional festival, but that scouts from First Rites will also be attending smaller film festivals to find films that meet their criteria: small and under-appreciated. Actually, a few of the First Rites titles have won major awards at festivals (*Fishing with Ghandi* won the Seattle Underground Film Festival and *Next Time* won Best Feature at the Hollywood Film Festival), but they're the rare exception. As per the great promise of the Internet, Strain remains a bit skeptical. "I don't know if I'd want to be a couch potato and order my food online and buy my clothes online and get my movies online," she says. "I kinda like being out on my feet. Besides, a lot of the time that you go to a video store and you don't know what exactly you're looking for. Who knows? You might even pick up a date."

Check out First Rites at www.firstrites.com, or, God forbid, snail-mail them a letter and your film to: 7560 Hollywood Blvd., Ste. 401, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor at The Independent *who was raised a good Catholic and would never think of picking up girls at a video store.*

COURTESY FIRST RITES

Sanjeev Chatterjee & Amitva Kumar

Pure Chutney: The Politics of Memory in the Indian Diaspora

BY ROBERT L. CAGLE



Man the cameras! Sanjeev Chatterjee & Amitva Kumar filming *Pure Chutney.*

"FOR THE LONGEST TIME I HAVE HEARD, 'THOSE who can, do; those who can't, teach," says documentary videomaker Sanjeev Chatterjee, quickly adding, "It doesn't bother me anymore." Chatterjee is an associate professor in the School of Communication at the University of Miami whose academic and creative accomplishments definitively prove such notions wrong. In addition to his teaching, Chatterjee has created a series of provocative videos that examine Indian identity in Western society, including *A Cousin's Marriage* (1993) and *Bittersweet* (1995).

For his latest work, the 42-minute documentary *Pure Chutney: The Politics of Memory in the Indian Diaspora*, Chatterjee collaborated with poet, photographer, and cultural critic Amitava Kumar, a longtime friend. Like Chatterjee, Kumar is both an artist and an academic. His photography and poetry—some of which is collected in *Passport Photos*—reflect the same politically engaged sensibility that informs his insightful theoretical writings.

Chatterjee and Kumar both grew up in Bihar, one of eastern India's most economically depressed areas. Both attended the same college in Delhi, and in a remarkable coincidence, both took academic posts at universities in Florida. The two first worked together in 1995 when Kumar provided photographs for Chatterjee's *Bittersweet*.

Pure Chutney grew out of its creators' shared interest in the relation between cultural heritage and political thought and practice. "The tendency of many in the Indian community in [the U.S.] to separate their 'Indian' identities and their 'American' identities according to situation fascinated me," says Chatterjee. "Many in the professional class seemed apolitical, or at best, armchair politicians who could discuss Indian politics and have vehement opinions about it. Their total disregard for a political life in America was striking."

Kumar's objective, on the other hand, was to develop a critique of the use of nostalgia as a rallying point by India's conservative political parties. "I wanted to engage in work that allowed progressive-minded Indians in the U.S. and U.K. to stage a protest. In that sense, the project for me, at least, was an attempt to articulate a progressive politics of nostalgia."

The literary works of brothers Shiva and V.S. Naipaul were a major influence on the video's co-creators. Shiva Naipaul's account of his travels from Trinidad to Bihar were especially influential. *Pure Chutney* inverts Naipaul's trajectory, travelling from Bihar to Trinidad by way of the United States. "I wanted to set Naipaul right-side-up, I guess," remarks Kumar. "I wanted to situate my own status as a traveller—and a post-colonial one at that—in a self-conscious materialist context." The U.S., then, becomes a kind of neutral interpretive territory in which the two videomakers come to understand their own past and the past they share with Trinidadians of Bihari descent.

The history that links Chatterjee, Kumar, and the Naipauls to Trinidad is nearly 200 years old. Early in the nineteenth century, Indians—many from Bihar—were sent to Trinidad to live as indentured laborers. They found themselves thrown into a society already highly hybridized by the cultures of the island's original inhabitants and those of various other nations, including Africa, England, France, and Spain. While each group struggled to hold on to its own specific traditions, the overall face of Trinidadian society began to change. Its language, religions, and festivals began to reflect its multicultural population.

The most fascinating aspect of the video is its unique ability to give expression to the mosaic of different voices and perspectives the videomakers encounter in their day-to-day travels. *Pure Chutney* combines travelogue footage, interviews, photographs, and voiceovers (including poetry, first-person narration, and dramatic readings). Chatterjee and Kumar discover that each interviewee has a slightly different opinion about what India represents. For some, it is a homeland of religious and cultural purity; for others, an example of social and political failure.

In one revealing sequence, a man takes part in a Hindu funeral service for his father, all the time discussing his own conversion to Christianity several years before. The man mentions that his name, "Kismeth," means "faith" in Hindu. But, as Kumar points out later on the soundtrack, "kismeth" actually means "fate." "Here in the diaspora," he remarks, "fate or destiny becomes very easily a matter of invented belief."

Pure Chutney examines the myriad influences on the cultures of Trinidad's Indian population. At the same time, it reveals the impossibility of maintaining the type of cultural purity promoted by India's more conservative political groups through nostalgic and idealized images of a past uncorrupted by the influences of Western culture.

Pure Chutney draws its strengths from the fact that Chatterjee and Kumar work as individuals, each developing his own separate approach based upon his individual interests. In so doing, it unites theory and practice to create a politically engaged work of ethnographic documentation that illustrates the different and often contradictory elements that make up both group and individual cultural identities. Their collaboration reveals and reflects the competing discourses at the heart of Trinidadian society, and indeed, the societies of virtually every industrialized nation.

Pure Chutney is available from The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Ste. 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com

Robert L. Cagle writes about film and popular culture.

Danny Plotnick

Swinger's Serenade

BY JASON SANDERS

A BRAVE NEW WORLD OF DIGITAL MEDIA IS RAGing just outside San Francisco filmmaker Danny Plotnick's window, but you'd never know it. Cluttered with half-remembered items rescued from decades past, Plotnick's apartment resembles a museum of defunct media and obsolete culture, with the energetic Plotnick functioning as a one-man custodian, curator, tour guide, and publicist. A self-proclaimed "King of Super 8" and vocal advocate of guerrilla distribution techniques, Plotnick has created over 15 works, ranging from the foul-mouthed *Steel Belted Romeos* to the sock-monkey epic *I, Socky*. He's now concentrating on his new 16mm work, *Swinger's Serenade*, which sets forth a history of amateur movie magazines and presents a respectfully lurid rendering of a script published in the July/August 1960 issue of *Better Home Movie Making*.



Danny Plotnick (right) and his *Swinger's Serenade*, a loving tribute of sorts to 1960s home-moviemaking magazines.

"Over the years I'd collect these amateur home movie-making magazines from the fifties and sixties," says Plotnick. Aimed at the fledgling suburban cineaste, these magazines gave pointers on everything from cleaning your camera to lighting interiors to getting the most out of your vacation shots of Maui. Some even presented short scripts for readers to film themselves. Plotnick discovered one buried in *Better Home Movie Making* that was a bit . . . well, swinging.

"At first glance the script wasn't that odd—a typical story of the philandering wife and the visiting Fuller Brush man," he notes. "What became odd was that the film was designed to be shot in the home. Presumably the husband/director would cast his real wife, plus a friend as the salesman, so it seems to set up this very weird dynamic. For example, when the husband comes home and catches the wife and the salesman 'mashing,' he waits around a very long time for them to notice him; a quarter of the script is just him standing around watching, which just seems really odd."

In Plotnick's hands this hint of erotic voyeurism becomes even more randy, as the naughty salesman withdraws countless kitchen tools from his briefcase to please the increasingly delighted wife. "There are so many interpretations of mashing," he muses. "Someone's interpretation thirty years ago would be completely different from the way I'd film it today, and my version would probably be different from five other filmmakers. What I'd love, of course, is to track down any other versions, especially from that time period."

Curator Melinda Stone recently invited Plotnick to show *Swingers* to an amateur film club that survives from that era. "These organizations really haven't been renewed since they started, so it's basically the same people who began them back in the fifties," Plotnick notes. "It was at the Forrest Hills Church. Four 80-year-old couples and one 60-year-old couple. It was very embarrassing—I stared at the floor the entire time." Fortunately, though, "they all seemed to like it. Everyone was insisting, 'Well, I must have missed that issue!' "

"Getting the films to the people" (as one of Plotnick's flyers proudly proclaims) is something the director has perfected over time. "Since not that many places show super 8, I do a lot of touring with the films. Eighty percent of the time, I bring the projector. Even more often, I wind up being the guy projecting. At least I can look at the audience reactions instead of the films, so I don't get too burned out on them."

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Plotnick's self-distribution began as a matter of necessity. "When I was making *Steel Belted Romeos* and *Dumbass from Dundass*, I identified with people like Jon Moritsuga and Jim Sikora, with whom I did shows, but it was really hard to get any kind of screening," he recalls. "There weren't a lot of festivals in the film world that were showing our work, but at the same time we knew there were all these people out there with whom we had something in common, so we just took our films to them. We could have spent all this time trying to fit into this world which didn't care that much about us, or we could go find an audience of people who shared similar cultural reference points."

Plotnick gets his do-it-yourself attitude not from film, but from the underground music scene. "A lot of people [during the late eighties] didn't fit into a certain accepted major label universe, so they went out and just created their own—their own distribution network, their own label, their own clubs, and their own media. I take a lot of my inspiration from that," he says.

Besides film and music, however, he has recently discovered a new source of satisfaction: teaching. Taking his philosophy of "getting it to the people" even further, Plotnick has started several seminars geared towards high school students, hoping to alert them to an alternative beyond narrative Hollywood. "Not only are you teaching kids how to handle and shoot film, but you're exposing them to all this stuff they never knew existed. They come in wanting to be the next Scorsese or Kubrick because they don't know any alternative—no shorts or experimental or documentaries or weird hybrids. But then we start showing them George Kuchar or Craig Baldwin, and they're just blown away. You show them this stuff and you see their eyes just light up."

Though partial to small-gauge formats, Plotnick knows it's the message, not the medium, that drives the film. "I'm still going to work in super 8," he says, "but as an artist you come up with an idea and you've got to choose the medium that serves the art the best." After that, it's just a matter of "getting it to the people," as he says. And with his teaching duties, plus a full-time job as seminar coordinator for Film Arts Foundation, plus touring, distributing, and even projecting his own work, Plotnick is doing exactly that.

For more information on *Swinger's Serenade*, visit: www.sirius.com/~sstark/mkr/dp/dp-bio.html; or contact Plotnick at: s8romeo@aol.com

Jason Sanders is the film research associate at the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California.

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The Broadband Revolution

What's in it for us?

BY GARY O. LARSON

THE "INTERNET CENTURY," AS AOL'S STEVE Case proclaimed it upon announcing his company's acquisition of Time Warner for a cool $165 billion, is off to a rousing start. Amazon.com's Jeffrey Bezos captured *Time* magazine's "Person of the Year" honors, e-commerce start-ups are flying high on Wall Street, and the World Wide Web passed the billion-page milestone. But thus far the centerpiece of the Internet Century—the broadband revolution that promises to bring high-speed connections to the home—has largely been a spectator sport. For most of us, it's a matter of watching a handful of media moguls play "Who Wants to be a Billionaire," while waiting for the cable guy to show up with the requisite black boxes and wires. The results so far have been meager: Case, Time Warner's Gerald Levin and Ted Turner, and AT&T's C. Michael Armstrong are the new broadband billionaires, with their newly purchased access to over half the nation's homes, while less than two percent of these households have successfully made the leap to high-speed Internet service.

But stay tuned, insist the experts. The Broadband Era is fast upon us. The final product, we're promised, with speeds "up to 100 times" that of standard 56-Kilobits-per-second dial-up modems, will be worth the wait. And waiting, after all, is hardly a new part of the Internet experience. In the meantime, until that cable Internet hookup or digital subscriber line (DSL) phone service arrives at our doorsteps, we have an opportunity to consider what's really at stake here.

First, some numbers: Overall, roughly a third of the nation's 103 million households are connected to the Internet, all but a small fraction using standard dial-up modems. At best, these users are reaching the Internet at 53 Kbps, although line conditions and network traffic often reduce this speed considerably. In contrast, cable customers who have opted to add Internet service, at roughly twice the cost ($40/month) of most dial-up accounts, can theoretically achieve download speeds of up to 6 megabits per second (or 100 times the fastest dial-up connection), although 1.5 Mbps downstream (receiving data) and 300 Kbps upstream (sending data) are much closer to reality. Residential DSL service, offered over standard telephone lines at costs that are rapidly declining to cable's level, is not quite as fast, generally falling between 384 Kbps and 1.5 Mbps downstream and 128 Kbps upstream. Still to come are satellite and "fixed-wireless" broadband delivery, both of which should be much more visible over the next few years.

Although the broadband market is tiny right now, as cable operators struggle to upgrade their systems for two-way digital transmission and as local phone companies scramble to catch up with the backlog of orders for DSL service, the broadband universe is expected to expand rapidly. It will total 3.3 million subscribers by the end of this year, according to a report released by the Yankee Group, and will reach a projected 16.6 million homes by 2004. And not long after that, these high-speed connections will become the standard way for most Americans to communicate online, using a variety of portable devices and in-home appliances that will be less costly and less complex than today's personal computers.

Just what these users will find at the other end of the broadband rainbow is another matter, however. The prospect of fast, "always-on" Internet service is enticing, to be sure. But some experts warn that the broadband revolution may turn out simply to be "more of the same"—an increasingly flashy World Wide Web, that is, with built-in links to full-service corporate portals and little incentive to venture much further than that. And if the cable companies have their way, other observers warn, the broadband revolution may turn out to be even *less* of the same.

"The good news," as Jeffrey Chester, executive director of the Center for Media Education in Washington D.C., views it, "is that the Internet has finally achieved transmission speeds that make online, full-motion video possible. The bad news is that most Americans, as things now stand, will be compelled to get a their Internet service from cable operators who have every incentive to direct network traffic in such a way as to favor company-owned and affiliated content." The Internet as we know it, in other words, will evolve from what the Supreme Court called "the most participatory form of mass speech yet developed" into something much more closely resembling the closed, top-down world of cable television.

That's the threat posed by the cable industry's control of the broadband environment, and with its current 80-percent share of the nascent high-speed Internet market, the two resident cable ISPs—Excite@Home and Road Runner—are off to a good start. Under current regulations, cable operators are allowed to exclude competitive Internet service providers from gaining access to the new broadband cable networks (unlike the standard dial-up environment, in which more than 6,000 ISPs offer a wide variety of services). Coupled with advances in network architecture that place new power in the hands of operators—including the power to grant fast passage to company-owned content while relegating competitive material to slower lanes—cable's exclusive control of the online access of millions of Americans poses a genuine threat to the Internet's future.

The prospect of fast, "always-on" Internet service is enticing. But the broadband revolution may turn out simply to be "more of the same"—an increasingly flashy World Wide Web, with built-in links to full-service corporate portals and little incentive to venture much further.

"There are two competing visions for the Internet now," observes Gary Chapman, director of the 21st Century Project at the University of Texas at Austin, "what might be called the 'public interest' vision and the 'infotainment' vision." In a sobering essay that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* earlier this year, Chapman left little doubt as to which direction the recent AOL-Time Warner merger would take us: "Instead of thinking of the Internet as a universal, public infrastructure used for democratic dialogue, diversity, and building society, we'll tend to think of it as a consumer service like cable TV, complete with updated, digital analogues of MTV, home shopping, Jerry Springer, infomercials, product tie-ins, cooking channels, and all the rest. Citizenship will once again be overwhelmed and eclipsed by consumerism."

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If that vision represents the potential peril of cable broadband—a souped-up, dumbed-down Internet with more "branded content" and interactive marketing and even fewer opportunities for independent and noncommercial producers to get a word in edgewise—what exactly is broadband's promise? Sure, the network owners will make a fortune on the bundling of multi-channel video, local telephony, and Internet service (which is one of the reasons that AT&T and AOL spent some $300 billion between them to become cable's top two landlords), but what's in it for us?

THAT QUESTION IS BEING ANSWERED, CURIOUSLY enough, in such communities as Santa Rosa, California; Montgomery County, Maryland; Pittsburgh; and a number of others. These are communities where local cable franchise authorities have managed to do what Congress, the FCC, and 50 state legislatures have thus far failed to accomplish. They have managed to secure a "public interest" dividend as a small but meaningful return on the broadband bonanza, even in the face of the cable conglomerates' growing power. "In spite of this escalating empire-building and globalization, citizens still have a say in how media conglomerates serve their local communities," insists Barry Forbes, a Washington-based consultant and long-time veteran of the franchise battles. "The valuable cable 'rights-of-way' needed by such mega-corporations as AOL Time Warner and AT&T are primarily controlled by local governments. So encouraging your community to create the best possible cable television franchise agreement is one of the few ways that citizens can help guarantee themselves, their families, school districts, places of worship, businesses, and the rest of their community the most benefit from the digital age."

That's precisely what happened four years ago in Santa Rosa, a small community an hour north of San Francisco, when its cable franchise agreement had to be renewed by Cable One (a company owned primarily by the *Washington Post*, with headquarters in Phoenix). "Cable companies use public rights of way," explains Laurie Cirivello, director of the Community Media Center of Santa Rosa, "and communities have certain rights and obligations to negotiate fair compensation for that use, on behalf of the people who own those rights of way. Santa Rosa was particularly astute, maybe even energetic, in that pursuit of fair compensation." Four years later, Santa Rosa has parlayed that pursuit into an impressive community resource, including a nonprofit media center that provides training, services, and access to technology; four channels on the local cable system; a media-literacy program in the schools, and a high-speed fiber-optic/coaxial hybrid network that links a variety of public institutions in the city. Montgomery County (with a 10-percent set-aside of digital bandwidth for local noncommercial use) and Pittsburgh (with three new community intranets linking public institutions in the city and $5 million in funding) have had similar success in their cable negotiations.

There are more than 5,000 such local franchise authorities in the country, many of which will be in a position to negotiate franchise transfers as a result of AT&T's recent acquisitions of TCI and MediaOne and the AOL-Time Warner merger. The "open-access" debate may have placed these negotiations on the front pages of many newspapers, but it's the smaller details of these agreements that may mean more in the long run. "A community right now which is not getting the most out of its benefit package," declares Bunnie Riedel, executive director of the Alliance for Community Media, "getting the cable operator to put in a public intranet, to hook up all the schools, to give them the service for free, to connect institutions like the police and fire departments—any community which is not doing that is foolish. These cable franchises are worth so much money. The cable industry pulls in $38 billion a year, and we estimate that their net profits are 40 to 50 percent. And that money goes out of the local economy to the corporate headquarters somewhere, never to be seen again."

"Encouraging your community to create the best possible cable franchise agreement is one of the few ways that citizens can help guarantee the most benefit from the digital age."
— Barry Forbes

The Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN), one of the largest public-access operations in the country, made sure that some of that cable money was seen again, with a generous franchise fee that amounts to $2.5 million a year for local, noncommercial programming. "We renegotiated with Time Warner up from about $3.25 per year per subscriber, to about $5

per year per subscriber," explains MNN executive director Anthony Riddle. "It's all a political process, and we were just very well organized."

Negotiating with a company like AT&T or Time Warner, concedes Santa Rosa's Cirivello, can be a daunting experience for many communities. "Say you're community of 30,000 or 40,000 people, and you've got a cable-franchise agreement that comes up every 15 years. You don't have high-powered attorneys there to do telecommunications law. You probably have some clerk who's told, 'Oh by the way, every 15 years make sure this contract is renewed.' And that's what you have up against the largest telecommunications conglomerates in the world. If there ever was a David and Goliath situation, that's it."

According to Riddle, the secret is building grassroots support for the public-access program before taking on the cable operator. "You have to drive yourself down into the community in such a way that they value you," observes Riddle. "And then you have to really treat it like a political campaign, because you're gonna be told, 'This can't happen and that can't happen,' and 'The cost of this and the cost of that is too much.' So it really comes down to, number one, organize your community to show that they want it, and number two, treat it as you would a business." Riddle says that means getting your message out as clearly as possible, and in terms that the public and city officials can understand. "In our case," he explains, "it meant translating our two-and-a-half million dollar budget, which sounds like a lot, into the cost of one can of Coke per month per subscriber. Or what Elaine, George, and Newman got for one episode of *Seinfeld.* And we're doing four channels 24 hours a day, with three studio locations and four studios, 15 cameras, 12 Macintosh-based nonlinear video editing suites, free training, and free channel time. That's a pretty good deal."

It's the kind of deal, certainly, given the economics of the broadband revolution, that other communities have within their grasp, if they are both persistent and mindful of the important opportunity that the cable-franchise process represents. "Savvy communities are beginning to understand that it may only come up for total renewal once every 15 years," Cirivello points out, "but it's a constant issue to be dealt with. Communities have to understand that their rights of way are one of the most precious commodities they have, and managing this resource has to be an ongoing concern."

Gary O. Larson is a contributing editor of The Independent *who covers telecommunications issues.*

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AND THE WINNER IS...

The Best (and Worst) of Sundance 2000



A Knock Out! Michelle Rodriguez, the star of *Girlfight*, by Karyn Kusama

JUST WHEN YOU WERE READY TO WRITE OFF Sundance 2000 as uneventful because Harvey Weinstein was out sick or others seemed stuck in a post-*Blair Witch* depression, it turned out to be another stellar year for films and parties, and not so bad for acquisitions, either. Major distributors were a bit tepid, having learned from past failures, but some new players, including a slew of Internet companies looking for "content," as well as major video stores looking for their own private cache, helped pick up the pace.

Looking back at almost every edition of Sundance since its inception, you'll see a film or a director who is now a milestone in the industry—and this year was no different. Down the road we'll look back and see Karyn Kusama, Michelle Rodriguez, and Marc Singer as pivotal figures who emerged this year. They are, respectively, the director and star of *Girlfight*, and director of the documentary *Dark Days*—all of which deservedly won big on awards night.

The Hollywood factor seems to have reached maximum overload, however, with major star spottings as common on the streets as in "indie" films. And the fact that there was a sudden mass exodus to L.A. for the Golden Globe Awards is yet another daunting sign. But then there are films like Miguel Arteta's *Chuck and Buck*, restoring your faith that the indie spirit is alive and well at Sundance.

Where else could you expect to have an ice cream social hosted by drag queen RuPaul and televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker? Nowhere but Sundance. Thus, here's our analysis of the best, the worst, and the most perplexing developments in Park City this year.

RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

Hot Buzzword

"Content"

One might have expected the buzzword of Sundance 2000 to be "digital film." But first of all, that's two words, and second, that was last year. This year it was "content." That's what every dot-com was after, but what exactly is it? Basically, it's what has replaced "product" in the age of the Internet, just as cyber space is replacing "brick and mortar" (my second nomination for Sundance buzzphrase). As we turn into a downloadable cyber culture and ownership rights become a blurry subject, "content" will be the standard description for your film, music, novel, or whatever. "Get Errol Morris on the phone, dammit! We need content!!"

RB

Worst Trends at Sundance

Violent crowds stuck outside private parties with V.I.P. passes that don't mean squat; little decorative fabric rings around the cuffs of jeans; cell phones with headsets.

I don't know what bouncers were earning at Sundance this year, but whatever it was, you can bet they'll want double next year. On several occasions, Main Street was a near-riot situation, with angry mobs flashing laminates that were taken about as seriously as a passport from Narnia (*"Do you know who I am?!!!"*). Then there's the really bad phenomenon of people wearing jeans with little strips of fabric sewn around the cuffs. You can bet those are gonna end up in a dark corner of a thrift store in six months. Finally, though I understand the threat of brain cancer, I have to note the similarity between paranoid schizophrenia and walking down the street talking into a little invisible microphone while receiving messages in your inner-ear. Be afraid. Be *very* afraid.

RB

Best Biceps

Girlfight

The Sundance consensus was that any film where a girl punches out a guy deserves an extra round of applause. Karyn Kusama and her incredible cast kick ass in Kusama's story of a young woman's self-realization, who oversteps gender stereotypes and economic limitations by becoming a champion boxer. Not only is it fun to watch her beat the heck out of the boys, but the stories of her romantic relationship with one of her opponents and her at-odds existence with her father are compelling and real. *Girlfight* demonstrates Kusama's incredible talent as a writer/director and is hopefully propelling with gusto what the festival describes as "femininity for a new millennium."

MICHELLE COE

Best Performance by Wooden Characters Impaled by Dowels

Gigantic (Absolute Giganten)

The stylish *Gigantic (Absolute Giganten)*, directed by first-time filmmaker Sebastien Schipper and produced by Tom Tykwer of *Run Lola Run*, plays as a sort of German *Jungen* hybrid of *Trainspotting* and *American Graffiti*. Three companions set out to make their last night together something to remember: not an easy task in a world marked by routine and forlorn hopes. Loud music, fast cars, drugs, melancholy, risk,

and beauty provide the bed for a series of episodes involving an angelic child, a gang of evil Elvises, magic realism, reflexivity, and a sharp dose of reality. The wooden men receiving this award are supporting characters in a pivotal scene that made the audience sweat along with the film's protagonists and roar out their collective relief at the climax (the most explosive reaction I saw at this year's festival). This is not a Great Movie, but one that succeeds by working at its own level: the stylistics don't overwhelm the story, and the oft-used storyline becomes more complex through Schipper's willingness to take directorial risks. *Ganz toll!*

ELIZABETH PETERS

Most Erotic Sex Scene
Luna Papa

Along the borders of the Caspian Sea, a passionate young woman longs to pursue an acting career far from the dusty village where she resides with her father and brother. One evening she is captivated by the performance of a Shakespearean actor. Soon thereafter she is followed by an invisible presence into the woods. She flees from the pursuing footsteps, then slips and falls down a hill. And here the magical, whimsical part begins. As she slides down the long slope by herself under the moonlight, her white dress becomes disheveled, sensuously twisting around her body; the atmosphere is erotically charged and her gestures become slow, dreamlike, and blissful. A rape? A seduction? It's certainly no ordinary fall, for the incident leaves her pregnant, and her father, outraged, seeks vengeance and searches for the perpetrator who ran off from his daughter. *Luna Papa* is a surreal tragicomic tale of misadventure that should not be missed.

MC

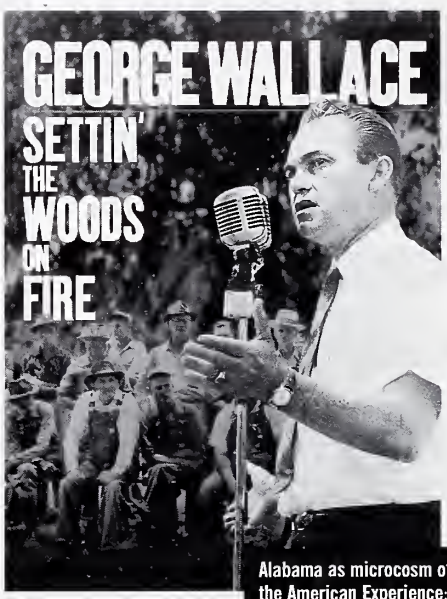
Best Reason to Visit Crown Heights, Brooklyn
Our Song

Director (and AIVF board member) Jim McKay was well into his script for *Our Song* and seeking a unifying element when one day he turned a corner and ran smack into the Jackie Robinson Steppers Marching Band. This band is a brilliant example of a community-based program that allows youths to develop discipline and a sense of worth. During subsequent research, McKay was so impressed by the experience of working with the band that he discarded plans to cast a rap star and had the band play themselves (and a variety of crew roles in mentored positions). In the vein of McKay's *Girls Town*, *Our Song* follows three teenage girls through the last weeks of summer, at a moment when their already heavy lives are complicated by news that their high school will close, forcing each to make complex choices about her future. McKay has created a rich tapestry of the everyday moments that subtly yet profoundly shape the lives of these young women, as well as a vivid, almost documentary portrait of a vibrant community.

EP



Members of the Jackie Robinson Steppers Marching Band, featured in Jim McKay's *Our Song*.



Alabama as microcosm of the American Experience: *George Wallace: Settin' the Woods on Fire.*

Best PBS Series Slogan
"All Alabama, All the Time."

You wouldn't think that the topic of Alabama over the course of this century would capture the Sundance programmers' imaginations, but two of the competition documentaries were about just that. Both are to be featured on PBS's *American Experience*, causing senior producer Mark Samels to quip that the new *AmEx* season is 'All Alabama, All the Time.' *Scottsboro: An American Tragedy* and *George Wallace: Settin' the Woods on Fire* are intensively researched documentaries taking on one of America's fundamental challenges: racism, as it played out in the Scottsboro trials of the '30s and in the life of George Wallace, shown to be one of the most complicated, driven figures in American politics.

CARA MERTES

Film That Should've Won an Award but Didn't
Chuck and Buck

This is the kind of film that Sundance was made for—smart, subversive, and indie to the core (aside from the fact that the screenplay was written by Mike White, who writes for *Dawson's Creek*). It was also one of the only

Best Festival Initiative:

HOUSE OF DOCS

BY CARA MERTES

As Park City prepares for the 2002 Winter Olympics, entire blocks of neo-quaint buildings are appearing on Main Street. While many feel that Park City has suffered from hosting such mega-events, expansion in and of itself is not necessarily a bad thing.

Witness the Sundance Film Festival, which this year unveiled its own building project: the House of Docs. An idea long in coming, the House of Docs is still a bit of a handyman's special, but as organizers Nicole Guillemet and Meredith Lavitt say, 2000 was the year to finally launch the initiative and invite reaction.

"We felt it was time to do for documentary what Sundance has done for independent features over the last 15 years," says festival co-director Guillemet. Though talk about a documentary initiative has been going on for years, this particular manifestation was supported by Sundance board member Pat Mitchell, the recently announced president of PBS and a long-time documentary producer.

"Each time I sat through a panel or presentation at the House of Docs," says Mitchell, "I wished that I'd had one-tenth of this knowledge about documentary filmmaking when I was an independent. There was such an open communication about the marketplace from those of us who commission and license, such helpful specifics about everything from subject matter to pitching to promotion, and such a caring supportive atmosphere for a community that doesn't often have the opportunity to feel like or respond like a community."

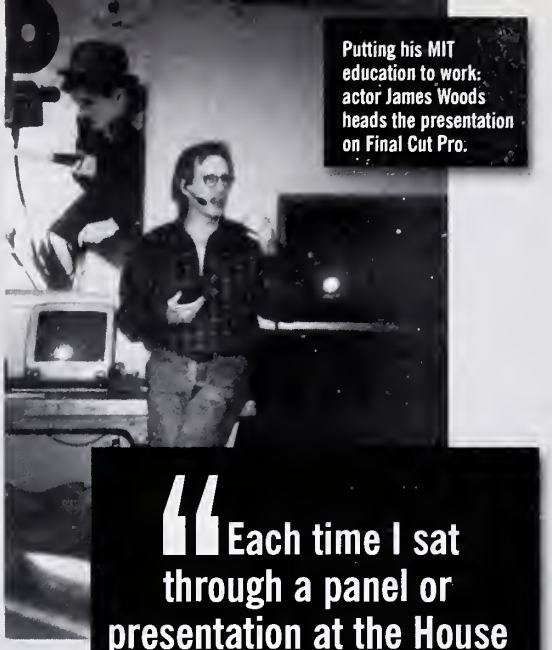
Initially Guillemet and Lavitt were concerned whether anyone would even come to their coffeeshop cum conference room. They need not have worried—everyone wanted more, but there are lessons to be learned. The House itself was only open for the first half of the festival, and only from 10 a.m to 4 p.m., leaving people coming for the second half with no House to go to. Panels sometimes seemed redundant, which may reflect the speed with which things were put together. There was no opportunity to screen works-in-progress (something that may change next year), and while there were attempts to address more complex issues, in general the discussions revolved around very basic information. These limitations merely show how necessary such a development is, and underscore the field's excitement at the thought of a high-profile lab for nonfiction film.

The House itself consisted of one large room with tables, a coffee bar, an area for panel discussions, and a presentation area where the likes of James Woods (the actor) could be seen hawking Final Cut Pro (the new Mac editing system)—a sight not soon forgotten. When panels or presentations were going on, however, people in the adjoining areas found themselves being told to whisper, which argues for separate spaces next year, but by and large the room was an effective base for meeting and hanging out. Funders, makers, and distributors made it a point to swing through several times a day and participated in generally well-attended panel discussions. Sundance staff made every effort to hook people up for meetings, but in a much more relaxed atmosphere than the stress-inducing pitch sessions at markets like IFFCON.

The primary funder for the House of Docs was the Open Society Institute (OSI), an increasingly important force in the world of documentary. OSI program officer Diane Weyermann explained that "the idea was to bring together documentary filmmakers, funders, broadcasters, distributors, film organizations promoting documentary, press, etc., with the support and expertise of the Sundance Institute and the high profile of the Sundance Festival to begin a series of debates and round-table discussions on crucial issues."

With positive reactions, high attendance and seemingly universal interest, Guillemet says that next year they plan to keep the House open for the entire festival. She shines with enthusiasm when talking about future programs, both at Sundance and at venues around the country, where some of the Institute's long-range goals may be pursued. As with the prestigious Sundance labs for narrative films, there may be opportunities for workshops, retreats, and storytelling seminars strictly oriented to the challenges of nonfiction filmmaking, always focusing on the creative process of documentary making rather than the business end.

In my own dream documentary world, this House might be a kind of home that rings with discussion, laughter, and healthy disagreements; that provides an opportunity to grapple with current trends, like 'reality TV'; or the promise and challenges of new media; or the mistaken belief that if you simply have a camcorder, you are a filmmaker; or the lack of networks for sophisticated, accessible feedback for filmmakers as they work; or the assumption in mainstream culture that documentaries are boring first, last, and always. Perhaps even the definition of nonfiction filmmaking will undergo the kind of critical re-assessment necessary to expand and enliven the form, so that the best work continues to defy expectation, surprise the soul, and reaffirm a dedication to finding new ways to tell the story.



Putting his MIT education to work: actor James Woods heads the presentation on Final Cut Pro.

"Each time I sat through a panel or presentation at the House of Docs, I wished that I'd had one-tenth of this knowledge about documentary filmmaking when I was an independent."

—Sundance board member Pat Mitchell

Cara Mertes is a producer/director, writer, and teacher living in New York City. She is currently Executive Producer of P.O.V./The American Documentary, PBS's award-winning nonfiction showcase.

films this year to live up to the much-heralded promise of digital video, looking fabulous under every lighting condition. Centering on two characters (played brilliantly by White and *American Pie* co-producer Chris Weitz) who engaged in homosexual games together as kids and later meet up again as adults, *Chuck and Buck* explores a deeply hidden subject in a most eerie and tongue-in-cheek way. It's a crime that this film did not win an award, and the only vindication is that it was picked up by marketing ace Artisan.

RB

The Watchmakers' Award for Craft, Precision, and Beauty

James Benning for *El Valley Centro*

Since 1974, Benning has turned out approximately one film a year, each of which combines formal structure with observational vignettes that make audiences experience the world in new ways. *El Valley Centro* is composed of 36 two-and-a half minute single shots (100 foot 16mm loads) taken in California's Great Central Valley. Benning conceived the location and content of each shot, then set out to harvest them, capturing whatever played out in front of his fixed camera while the film ran. *El Valley Centro* tells its story by showing scenes of natural landscapes disrupted by industrial impositions, resulting in a political message that viewers will decode on their own terms. Benning maintains a canny wit and a sense for the interplay of sound and image that imbue his simple shots with a gamut of emotions, allowing them to ascend to the level of documentary poetry. During the post-screening discussion, it became apparent that with this $12,000 film, Benning has captured a new group of admirers.

EP

Honor Thy Father: director Aiyana Elliott with her dad Ramblin' Jack Elliott, star of *The Ballad of Ramblin' Jack*.



Best Non-Filmic Event

A Night with Folk Singer Ramblin' Jack Elliott

Ramblin' Jack Elliott may not be known to the mainstream, but he is a legend, and like all legends, has more than his share of charisma and mystery. Elliott came to fame in the '50s and '60s as one of the original folk musicians, carrying on Woody Guthrie's musical legacy. His name refers not just to his habit of traveling any old time, but for his rambling performance style, in full force at a private Main Street party honoring *The Ballad of Ramblin' Jack*, the documentary about him created by his daughter, Aiyana Elliott. It seemed at times as if Elliott's style, honed after 40 years on the road, might fall flat in the impatient world of Sundance, but people were enchanted, drawn into to the stories of a long-time survivor whose best friend is his music.

CM

Best Appearance by a Former AIVF Employee

Eva Vives, *Five Feet High and Rising*

I loved Eva when she used to answer our phones at AIVF in a sultry Spanish accent, and I felt like a proud parent when she stood up on stage, sharing in the Jury Award for Best Short Film with director Peter Sollett for *Five Feet High and Rising*, on which she multi-tasked as co-producer, casting director, and co-editor. The film is a brilliant peek into the sexual tensions of kids growing up all too fast on the Lower East Side, in the dead heat of summer. Turns out, not only is Eva beautiful and a whiz on the ol' fax machine, she's also a rising star in the film world. *Muy bien hecho, guapa*

RB

Most Absurd Statement by a Movie Star

"Sofia Coppola is on the same level as Francis Coppola and Martin Scorsese."

— James Woods

If Sofia Coppola is one of the top three directors in the world today, I'm William S. Burroughs, and I just shot Courtney Love in the head in Mexico City. Coppola did a good job directing *The Virgin Suicides*, and that's commendable, but genius it is not. Howard Stern recently summed up the younger Coppola's stature by playing an excerpt from the press conference on his show, in which she said the best advice her father gave her as a director was "to take naps on the set and stay off my feet." Look out, Scorsese.

RB

The Hypocrisy Award

Blockbuster

Blockbuster was in full force at this year's festival, appearing as a major sponsor as well as slipping into the new role of dealmaker. The home video chain offered P&A funds and an advance of around $2 million against revenues to two films: Isaac Eaton's *Shadow Hours* and Valerie Breiman's *Love and Sex*. Blockbuster's "dream deals" may be golden, but don't put the company on a pedestal. After all, Blockbuster still refuses to carry NC-17 films on their shelves. And does that advance go toward the re-editing of films for "family" audiences?

MC

Best Film Tchatchka

Stranger with a Camera's "Ask Before You Shoot" Disposable Camera

A little talked about feature of film festivals are the giveaways created by directors and their promoters to bring attention to their films. These items range from the ubiquitous magnets and hats and now increasingly, boxer shorts, all with logos printed on them, to more memorable fare. This year's best tchatchka award goes to *Stranger with a Camera*'s "Ask Before You Shoot" throwaway camera. Developed with funder ITVS for the festival, the camera is

a deft reminder of how readily we take the power of representation for granted, sometimes with unforeseen consequences—a major theme of this film directed by Appalshop's Elizabeth Barrett, which revisits the murder of a Canadian documentary filmmaker by an Appalachian elder, who was fed up with his impoverished community being the object of study by trespassing do-gooders.

CM



Best 'Private' Moment
The Filmmakers' Brunch

The drive to the Sundance Institute, 45 minutes outside of Park City, is the single best reminder of where in the world you are. Gone are the crowds, the screenings, the party hopping. In front of you is some of the most beautiful land Utah has to offer—brittle-edged canyons, stone-green streams, and dark mountain ranges reaching into the horizon. This is the land that drew Redford to Sundance decades ago, and one where privacy might seem possible, even probable. But life during the festival is studded with the kind of paradox that celebrity brings. Witness the filmmaker's lunch—an event reputedly closed to all but festival filmmakers, where Redford held forth about the value of the creative work being done, as well as the pitfalls of sudden success. At the end, he promised a private chat with every filmmaker there—a generous offer that was not to be, as he was immediately surrounded by cameras and lights that appeared as if from nowhere, and each brave attendee had to step into the spotlight for their 15 seconds in the artificial glow that follows a superstar.

CM

Richard Baimbridge and Cara Mertes are contributing editors of The Independent, *Michelle Coe is AIVF's program and information services director, and Elizabeth Peters is AIVF's executive director and publisher of* The Independent.



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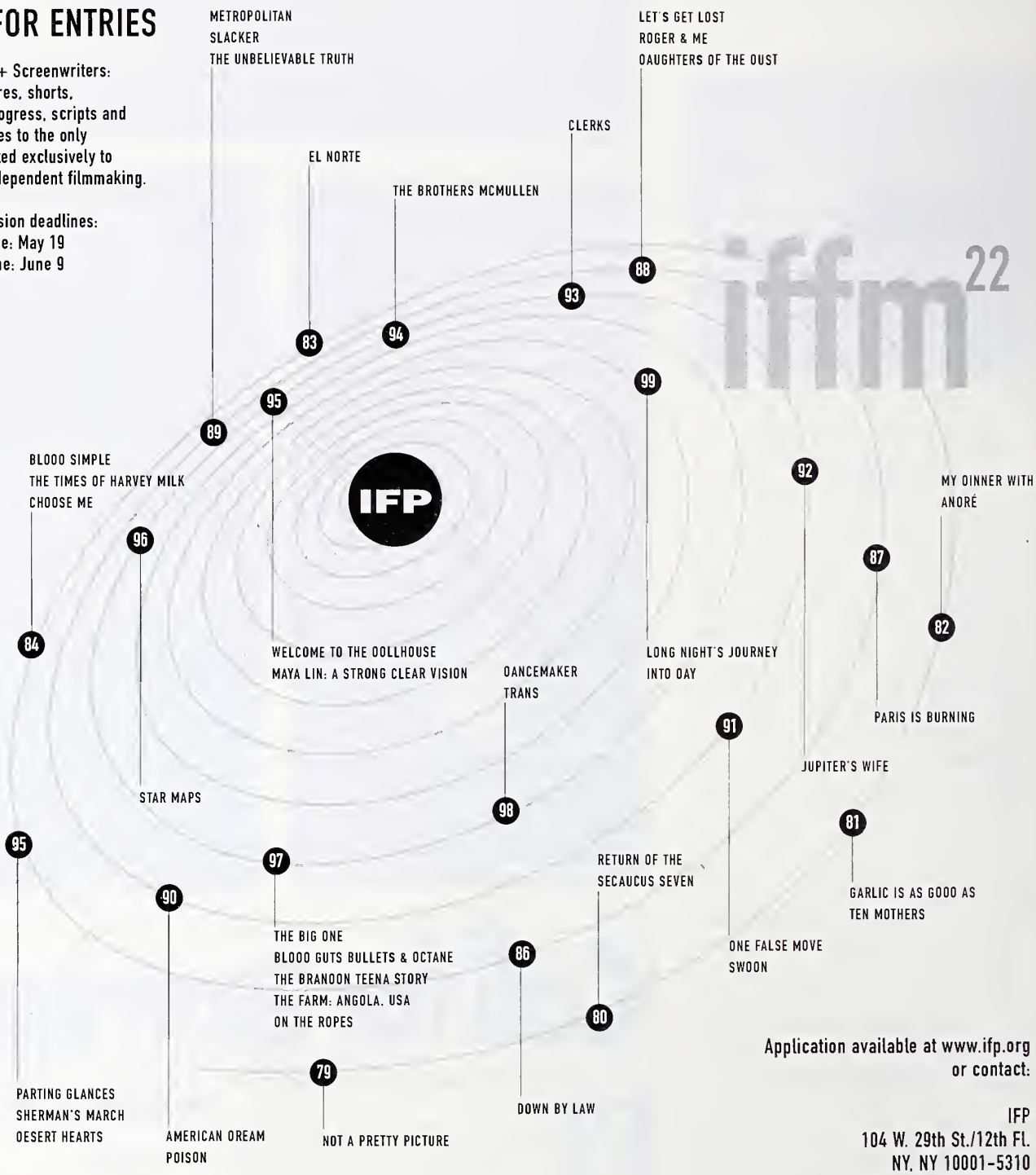
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Leaving the Bear Behind

The 50th Berlinale takes a new turn.

BY PAUL POWER



The festival's CineStar screens, part of a new multimedia complex.



Donald Holden as George in *George Washington*.

CINESTAR PHOTO: JILL GRAVES

A SNAKING LINE OF BRIGHTLY COLORED WATER pipes follows the route of the wall that once divided Berlin—a reminder of the division Cold War politics grimly imposed on Germany and on Europe in the latter half of this century. The pipes are the visible signs of reconstruction and reunification of the city, with the past 10 years spent marrying incompatible water, sewage, telephone, and electricity systems that had operated on opposite sides of the wall.

In a curious way these twin systems reflect what's been happening at the 50th Berlinale (February 9-20) which this year moved from its former headquarters in the heart of old West Berlin at the CineCentre into salubrious new premises at Potsdamer Platz. Time will tell if the Potsdamer Platz experiment works—a blend of high-rise office towers, allied with retail, cultural, and residential components—but the festival certainly had a lot to trumpet this year: brand-new offices with more space than before, impressive, if characterless, screening facilities (over 25 screens available), and a high-profile roster of international fare in its Competition, Forum, and Panorama sections.

Yet the heart was missing from the festival: there was no central place to meet, mingle, and make deals, unlike the scruffy but familiar CineCenter of yore. Market participants on both sides of the fence at the nerve center of the festival—the European Film Market—had mixed reactions to the new setup. Like the readjustments that have shaped the city since 1989, the new-look Berlinale is going to take a bit of getting used to.

One of the casualties of the relocation was the American Independents at the Market (AIM) stand, hosted by the Independent Feature Project. AIM, showcasing eight projects (with another eight using the area as their unofficial home), was "lost in the German Boulevard," says market director Beki Probst, describing the stand's incongruous location, the result of AIM's sponsorship by the German division of Kodak. The IFP's Milton Tabbot also notes how "There was less drop-in traffic than usual," due to the AIM stand being located among the German stands. Probst and Tabbot are hoping that a North American pavilion can be set up for next year, along the lines of the Cannes model, where the IFP, together with companies such as Good Machine and Lions Gate, can have more of a visible presence.

Although sales agents reported that business was slack, Sharan Sklar, who was at Berlin repping two projects for producer Lisa Muskat's Blue Moon Films—David Green's feature *George Washington* and Mei Juin Chen's documentary *The Worlds of Mei LanFang*—attained her twin goals at the market. Not only did the accomplished *George Washington* attract a sales agent, Swiss-based Christa Saredi, but *Mei LanFang*, a portrait of China's most famous Peking opera star, sparked interest from a number of sources. "It was a good experience in terms of getting feedback, getting visibility," says Sklar. And U.S. filmmakers found that European buyers were more willing to take the time to listen to a pitch or attend a screening than at other festivals. After a week of meetings, Chicago-based director Ben Berkowitz (*Straightman*) notes how "The priorities of the Germans and Italians are different from the U.S. They're not obsessed with big-budgets, and there's a real reverence for the art film here."

Mirroring the festival selections screened in the U.S. over the past 18 months, the most interesting American work on show at Berlin was by documentary makers. Notable among the North American market screenings was *Long Night's Journey into Day* (also a Forum selection), Frances Reid and Deborah Hoffman's documentary on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The film begins with the parents of an American student coming to terms with their daughter's murder in South Africa, and closes on a remarkably conciliatory note as the families of murdered black township youths embrace and forgive a black policeman for tipping off his white colleagues who mowed the young men down. Ron Mann's delightful *Grass* was a chronicle of the history of marijuana in the U.S. and the government's hilariously inept efforts to stem its use and abuse, while *Straightman*, a new take on contemporary male relationships, was being touted by writer/producer team of Berkovitz and Ben Redgrave at the market.

"A little bit of magic was lost," says Cowboy Booking International's Noah Cowan of the move to the Potsdamer Platz area. Cowboy picked one of the few gems at Berlin this year: Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen's Forum doc *Benjamin Smoke*, a deeply affecting portrait of an Atlanta musician and hellraiser who, until his death last year, sang some of the most mournful, poignant songs since Tom Waits or John Martyn stepped up to the mic. "Nothing could match seeing the film in the Delphi," Cowan continues, waxing nostalgic for the festival's grand, old-style cinemas, the Delphi and Zoo-Palast which, he fears, will not remain part of the festival for much longer. The buzz and energy around the center of old West Berlin were palpable, elements that have yet to seep through to the multi-locational venues of the revamped festival. The 19-screen CineMaxx housed most of the Forum, Panorama, and market screenings, while video screenings took place in the nearby CineStar cinema, part of a vast complex due to open this June that also houses Sony's interactive music center, where you can play air guitar with your rock heroes or conduct the Berlin Philharmonic in a virtual orchestral experience.

There was a strong U.S. presence in this year's Forum section, with *Benjamin Smoke*,

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Clockwise from top left: *Chutney Popcorn*, Nisha Ganatra's feature about a lesbian surrogate mom.

Looking at masculinity in Ben Berkowitz's *Straightman*

Chistian Bale as Patrick Bateman, the embodiment of 1980s narcissism, in *American Pyscho*.

Happy Days: from Ron Mann's *Grass*, a history of marijuana in America.

George Washington, and *Long Night's Journey into Day* all generating positive word of mouth on the state of independent filmmaking here. Only Sharon Lockhart's *Theatro Amazonas*, an intriguing 30-minute single take of 300 rural Brazilians assembled in a grand old theater, sparked any kind of contentious debate between the audience and filmmaker.

The Panorama section included a screening of Errol Morris' *Mr. Death*, an unnerving experience in a city which has only recently begun shedding the sins of its fathers. Other Panorama selections included an enthusiastically received *Chutney Popcorn*, Nisha Ganatra's debut, and Mary Harron's *American Psycho*, in its untrimmed form.

Unlike the more adventurous programming of the Rotterdam Film Festival, Berlin takes a homogenous approach. Its competition section featured a number of high-profile U.S. studio features such as *Man in the Moon*, *Any Given Sunday*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Beach*, *Three Kings*, and Golden Bear winner *Magnolia*, causing more than one attendee to wonder if the independent ethos of the festival is being eroded by heavy-hitters. However, it's worth remembering that the prior features of Milos Forman, Oliver Stone, Anthony Minghella, Danny Boyle, David O. Russell, and Paul Thomas Anderson would have been exactly

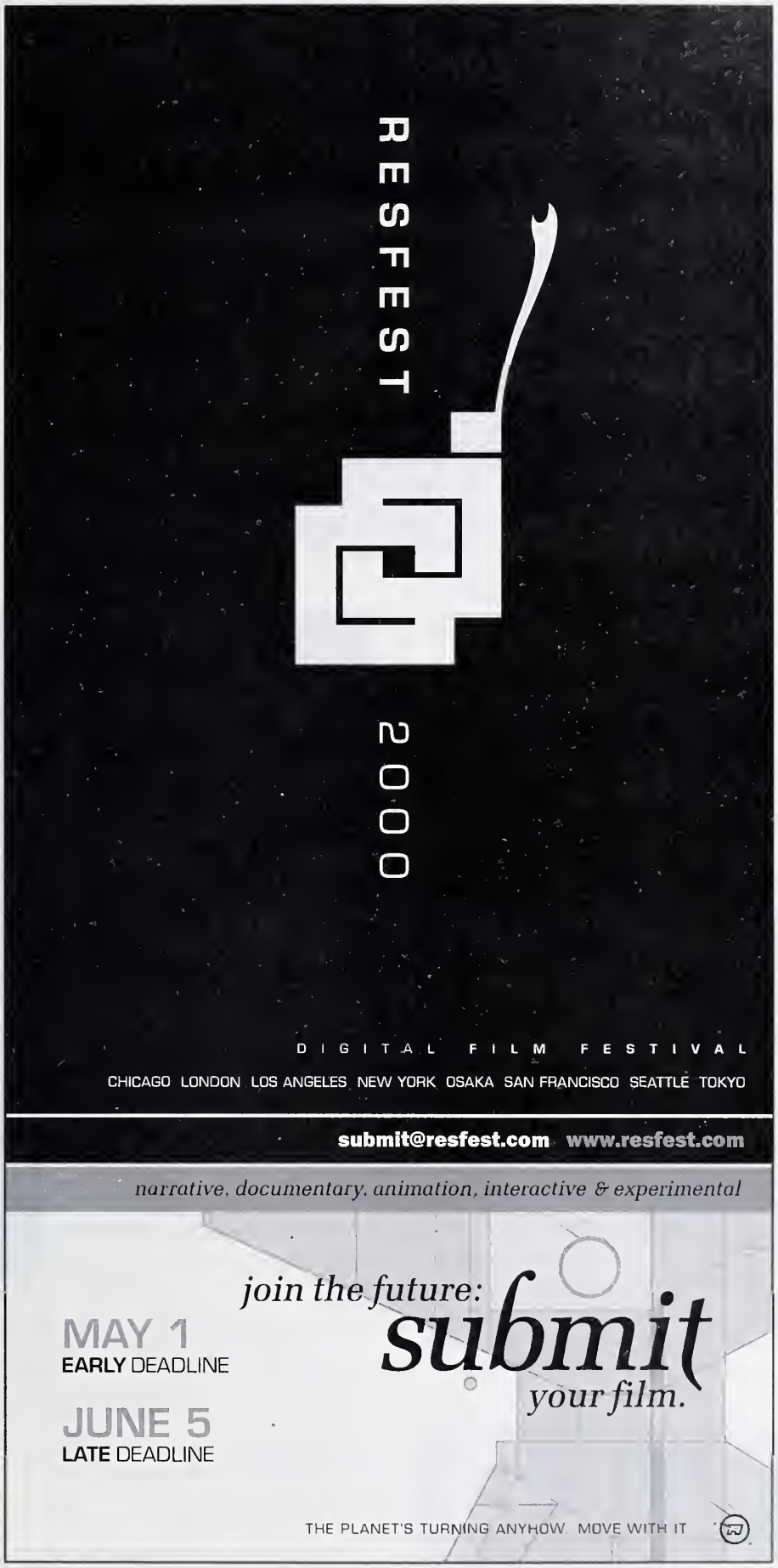




the sort of fare that gave Berlin its primacy on the international festival circuit in the first place.

All across the city, the face of Berlin is changing, with the city's administration keen to make the new capital the Hub of Europe rather than the old gateway to the East. Even the Bundestag, the epitome of New Germany, sports a modern dome ("perfect for aiming missiles at," quips one Berlin friend) designed by British architect Sir Norman Foster. There's that duality again: maybe by next year the Berlinale will be able to make it work in its favor.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.



Latin Heat

U.S. Latinos at the Puerto Rico International Film Festival

BY HOWARD FEINSTEIN



PRIFF founders: Juan Gerard Gonzalez and Letvia Arza-Goderich. Below: The dating game from a Chicana perspective in *Luminarias*.

ON JANUARY 31, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT offered to increase development aid to the tiny Puerto Rican island of Vieques from $40 to $90 million—if its angry residents vote in three years to retain a naval base specializing in bombing and rifle practice (the only one on U.S. soil in a civilian area). Simultaneously, the Puerto Rico International Film Festival (PRIFF) was in full swing on six San Juan screens. Art couldn't be more relevant: The festival captured the dualism inherent in Puerto Rican life (and, in some way or other, Latino life in the mainland U.S.), caught as it is between a Spanish sociocultural heritage and an American political/economic stranglehold.

Now in its ninth edition, the PRIFF, which ran January 27-February 5, is the baby of programmer/filmmaker Juan Gerard Gonzalez and his producer/attorney wife, Letvia Arza-Goderich. An intense, 63-film event produced for a meager $150,000, it is a popular event, though it has one big thorn in its side: another film festival, with only half the films but twice the budget, in the same city. Ironically, Gonzalez and Arza-Goderich founded the San Juan Cinemafest in 1989, but left two years later over artistic differences.

Whereas the San Juan Cinemafest hosts a biannual Caribbean film competition, the PRIFF exists mainly as a forum for new Spanish-language films from Spain and Latin America (a little weak this go-round), as well as a fine sampling of international arthouse fare in a variety of languages. Notably absent, however, are American independent films—at least those directed by non-Latinos. "There is no interest here in American independent filmmaking," explains Gonzalez. American indie films eventually come to Puerto Rico on video, he says, adding that Puerto Rican independents—the few who do not end up in L.A. or New York—look to Spanish and Latin American independents for inspiration, but to the U.S. for financial support.

The PRIFF did screen two excellent indie films made by Latinos in the U.S. "We try to point the way to new Latino artists," says Gonzalez. "*Nueba Yol* premiered here. We try to find those little jewels, like *El Circulo Vicioso* and *Luminarias* this year, even if Sundance doesn't want them and Miramax and Fine Line are not behind them."



Sundance did in fact refuse *Luminarias*, a first feature by Mexican-born Jose Luis Valenzuela, a longtime L.A. resident, and South by Southwest put it in an undesirable morning slot. Spain came to the rescue with a good spot at the San Sebastian Film Festival, where Gonzalez and Arza-Goderich saw it. Nelson Pena, a New Yorker of Dominican descent, did not submit his first film, the genre thriller *El Circulo Vicioso*, to mainland festivals. The PRIFF wanted it for its international debut, a month before it opened the second Santo Domingo Film Festival.

Valenzuela shot *Luminarias* in English; Pena made *El Circulo Vicioso* in Spanish. That both films have found U.S. distribution is encouraging to novice indie directors of any stripe.

IN *LUMINARIAS*, A CHARACTER-BASED COMEDY/drama about four yuppie Chicanas in Los Angeles, Evelina Fernandez, who wrote the screenplay and is married to the director, plays a lawyer, separated from her unfaithful Chicano husband, who embarks on an affair with a white Jewish colleague. Her three close girlfriends, all of whom have their social—and sexual—issues, are horrified. "The film is about us, our own racism," says the 48-year-old Valenzuela, a theater veteran who chairs the MFA directing program at UCLA.

Valenzuela, whose style is unobtrusive but controlled, shot the film in 35mm for $185,000, mostly from "our friends, the doctor, whoever we knew. And I got a lot of free stuff from friends inside a studio for postproduction," including an Avid. When asked if it was risky to shoot a film geared mainly for Latinos in English, he answers firmly, "No, no, no, no, no." He feels that the target audience will see the film. "We are the ones who need to see it. I don't care if it crosses over, as long as people come."

Valenzuela says he chose not to go to Latino organizations for funding, because "we didn't want to get involved with anybody who would say, 'This is the way to make the film.' " He didn't approach the studios either. "I don't think Hollywood is the answer for Latino filmmakers," he explains. He also didn't ask any independent film organizations for help. "I find independent film movements to be a very white culture," he says, then admits that, "the chip is on our shoulders."

When asked if it was risky to shoot a film geared mainly for Latinos in English, director Jose Luis Valenzuela answers firmly, "No, no, no, no." He feels that the target audience will see the film. "We are the ones who need to see it. I don't care if it crosses over, as long as people come."

Luminarias is being distributed by New Latin Pictures, a company founded in 1993 by classic-film distributor Kit Parker and Lawrence E. Martin, who had worked for many years



From Nelson Pena's thriller *El Circulo Vicioso* distributed by Nova Creative Releasing

exhibiting and marketing Spanish-language films. Their first success was *Nueba Yol*, which grossed more than $3 million. New Latin is also in the business of making movies. "We've produced two films in Spanish and are working on six more over the next couple of years," says Parker, whose company works out of Sand City, California, near Monterey.

Valenzuela, whose crew worked with the understanding that they would get paid if the film was sold, recounts his search for a distributor. "Most of them, like Sony Classics, said they didn't know how to market the film." He says that his deal with New Latin is a partnership. "We're going to do a grassroots campaign," he says. "Most of the money they would have given us as an advance, they can use for publicity and prints." The film opened in Los Angeles this spring, and will platform to cities "where there is a large Latino community."

EL CIRCULO VICIOSO IS SLICK. THE STORY revolves around a six-man, mostly Dominican gang of lowlife drug dealers whose leader, Mellizo (Rafael Decena), is betrayed by his best friend. The film, shot in the Bronx and Manhattan's heavily Dominican Washington Heights section, is both violent and funny.

Pena worked from a budget of only $11,000. The 29-year-old filmmaker, who has worked on pictures by Spike Lee and Stanley Kubrick (the New York crew of *Eyes Wide Shut*), began shooting in '97, a year after graduating from City College. "I borrowed a camera, sound equipment, and one movie light," he recalls. "The rest was this rig that I invented that held practical bulbs. I did that because we didn't have a generator, so I had to plug in. I was shooting in peoples' apartments and in restaurants, so I had to keep the wattage low." He says that he continually altered his script to suit his budget. "You can only do rain, night shots, and helicopters with $3-5 million." His crew shot a little at a time.

He acknowledges limited assistance: 25 cans of donated 16mm film (it's now blown up to 35mm), $1,000 from Bronx Recognizes Its Own (BRIO), and free access to an Avid in post. He did not apply for grants from organizations that support independent film. "Most grants, like NYSCA and the Jerome, are very competitive, and they wanted to see a finished product," he says. "This was a work-in-progress."

The film is being distributed by New York's Nova Creative Releasing, "the offspring of Creative Entertainment, a film buying service representing 300 screens in the Northeast, including New York's City Cinemas," according to Jesus Nova, who runs the outfit with Nick Guadagno. The first film they released was the Dominican hit *A One-Way Ticket*. They also produced and released the Spanish-language film *Buscando un Sueno* and distributed such films as the recent Mexican *Santitos*.

Nova says they plan to release *El Circulo Vicioso* in late April or May, and that some theaters will show subtitled prints—Pena wants the movie to cross over—and others, unsubtitled. "Nelson knows that I own the Nova and Coliseum theaters (cinemas in Latino neighborhoods in Manhattan)," he says. Being exhibitors allows them to book films that they produce and/or distribute. Hopefully, Nova Creative will continue to show the "little jewels," and they and New Latin will continue to back product that will do their screens proud—not to mention the screens of their English-language counterparts.

Howard Feinstein writes about film for Detour *and* Time Out New York *and London, and programs the Panorama section of the Sarajevo Film Festival.*

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Rescue Me

Creative Capital & the Funding Climate Today

BY ANDREA MEYER

BEING AN INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER HAS NEVER been easy. We live in a country that has never exactly thrown money at the arts, and the drastic cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts over the last 10 years has made the situation infinitely bleaker. As far as individual artists are concerned, the NEA might as well have been blown to bits, because individuals are no longer directly eligible for grants. In an atmosphere of conservatism and fear, many regional granting agencies followed suit. Private funders still exist, of course. The Fords, Rockefellers, Guggenheims, and MacArthurs continue to grant money to artists. But those funds are limited, competitive, and often partial to socially conscious PBS-bound documentaries.

Artists are now forced to adapt to a new landscape—one that's relatively barren and inhospitable. So last year when Creative Capital emerged from the rubble like a phoenix, with $1 million in funds available annually for "artists who are pursuing innovative, experimental approaches to form and/or content in the visual, performing, and media arts," many desperate souls grasped at this straw—1,800 applicants, to be precise. Early this year, Creative Capital announced its first generation of grant recipients: 75 artists who collectively will receive $563,700. In addition to providing money, the organization will also advise their grant recipients on how to raise additional funds and maximize their audiences. While this is common foundation procedure, what's unique to Creative Capital is their stipulation that "in return for Creative Capital's financial and managerial support, artists selected will share a portion of the proceeds generated by their projects with Creative Capital's Fund. These proceeds, used to replenish the fund, will enable Creative Capital, in turn, to support more artists in the future."

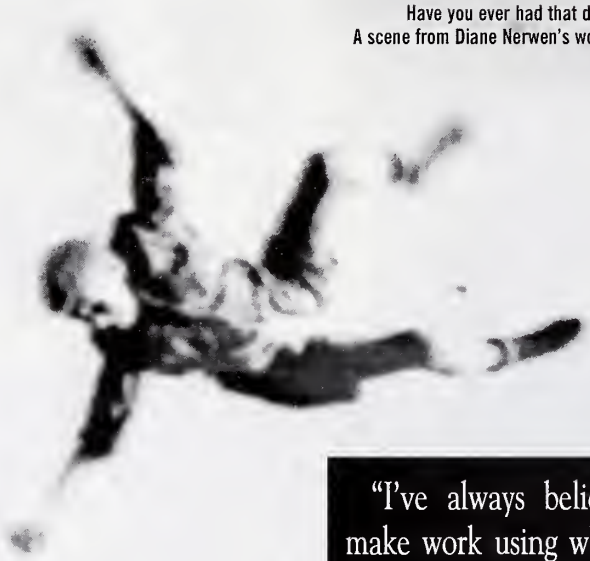


Jackie Smith & Alex Auder in Peggy Ahwesh's upcoming feature, *The Star Eaters*.

"It's a new area for me, to make something feature-length, this narrative, and also to work with digital video. I think that's one reason I got funded, because I'm taking a lot of career risks." —*Peggy Ahwesh*

In other words, these 75 artists are participating in a new funding experiment. "It isn't like a loan, where the artist has to pay something back if the project doesn't generate income," explains executive director Ruby Lerner. "We are making grants based on artistic merit. That's the bottom line. But if something becomes financially successful, we will participate in a small way financially." This is where Creative Capital differs from more traditional funding organizations. Like a foundation, they will give, but like a producer, they will take measures to protect their investment. "For example, in media," Lerner says, "we would try to get them to a distributor who might help them, or if they wanted to self-distribute, we might get them consulting in that area." Experts will be hired by Creative Capital to advise recipients in areas such as creative promotion and distribution. In more conventional foundation fashion, the agency will also use their contacts to generate additional funds for projects they are supporting. "Part of their mission statement is that the relationship doesn't end with the check," says Alex Rivera, one of the recipients. "It begins with it."

Have you ever had that dream where you're falling? A scene from Diane Nerwen's work-in-progress, *Blindspot*.



"I've always believed you should make work using whatever tools you have access to. I've had some luck with grants. But grant or not, I just keep making the work." —*Diane Nerwen*

CREATIVE CAPITAL FOCUSES ON THE KIND OF creative risk-takers who tend to scare the NEA and other more conservative funding institutions. These are the kinds of artist who either patch film budgets together with the help of private grants or just plug along regardless of whether funding is in place or not. While expressing varying degrees of skepticism about the likelihood of their work ever generating a



In *Border Beach Picnic*, from Alex Rivera's Tijuana 2000, separated immigrant families share Sunday picnics through the fence at the U.S./Mexico border.

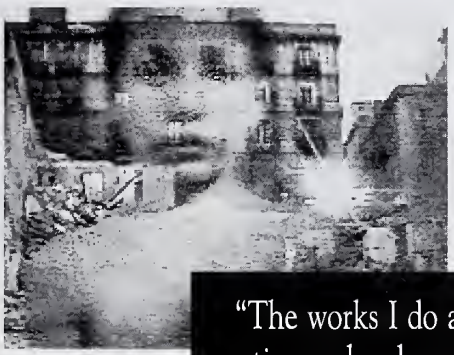
profit, all seem willing to give Creative Capital's pay-back concept a shot.

Rivera received $10,000 towards *Tijuana 2000*, his interactive "digital mural" about the U.S./Mexico border. "Creative Capital is trying to break down the dichotomy that art should either be made with profit in mind or it's a sinkhole for money," says the 26-year old artist. "They want to take risks and fund work like mine, but in a way that will take the best of a venture capital model. By taking care of the project and continuing a relationship with the artist, they'll be able to make some of these projects financially viable and challenge the whole notion that art is a waste of money."

Portia Cobb, 45, who received a $10,000 Creative Capital grant for her experimental documentary *Yonges Island*, has found the search for funding to be a constant struggle. "It's drying up across the nation," she says. "There are very few grants around with the interest of individual artists' work. I have been invited to apply to the Rockefeller Foundation, and I'm always getting the rejection letter. I've applied seven or eight times."

Grants are especially crucial for artists making challenging works that are unlikely to make a profit. Adam Cohen, a 45-year-old video/filmmaker and photographer who has a mountain of debt and no health insurance, and just received $6,000 from Creative Capital, says he has often been excluded from traditional funding sources. "The works I do are very personal, poetic works done with a super 8 camera, without a crew, without actors," he says. "You're not going to get investors for that." Yet he has continued to work and receive funding at crucial moments. He was able to buy his first movie camera and make the jump from photography to film with a NYSCA grant in 1989. A Jerome Grant fortuitously came through when he was working on a film in Barcelona, he says, "just at the point where I ran out of my own money and thought the project was going to die."

From Adam Cohen's look at the red light district of Barcelona, *Fire of Time*, the second installment of his Cities Trilogy.



Many artists, especially those on the cutting edge, just do the work without worrying about how they are going to pay for it. Peggy Ahwesh, 43, who's been making experimental films for almost 20 years, spent years avoiding the fundraising game. "I never felt I was too good at it, so I worked with very limited means." For her latest project, *The Star Eaters*, Ahwesh has received $7,500 from Creative Capital as well as NYSCA and Jerome Foundation grants. She is waiting to hear about a $50,000 Herb Alpert Award for which she was nominated. "I never got an NEA," she says. "My work was always too outrageous." She feels *The Star Eaters*, however, represents a career shift. "It's a new area for me, to make something feature-length, this narrative, and also to work with digital video. I think that's one reason I got funded, because I'm taking a lot of career risks."

Diane Nerwen, 35, who received $6,500 for her untitled experimental documentary about German/Jewish relations, says she has always made work that is within her personal means, rather than getting stressed about money. "I've always believed you should make work using whatever tools you have access to. That changed a lot over the years, and then my work shifted. I've had some success and luck with grants, from NYSCA and Experimental TV Center. But, grant or not, I just keep making the work."

"The works I do are very personal, poetic works done with a super 8 camera, without a crew, without actors. You're not going to get investors for that."

—Adam Cohen

THE IDEA OF POTENTIALLY MAKING A PROFIT ON a film or video and sharing that with a funder is completely novel to many of these grant recipients. "It's a different approach to arts funding, in that you put the money back," says Cobb. "That gives you even more reason to come through and try to put something there for other artists who need the funding. I think it's a grand idea, and I hope that I can honor it." On the other hand, experimental filmmaker Philip Soloman, 46, who received $5,000 towards his *Twilight Zone*-inspired short *Night of the Meek*, says, "I'm cautious but interested in what Creative Capital's trying to do. The problem with experimental film is that it rarely makes a profit. The expenses are so high and the income low. So the question that comes into play is, how are they going to recoup their investment?"

"Creative Capital is trying to break down the dichotomy that art should either be made with profit in mind or it's a sinkhole for money."

— Alex Rivera

What's so novel about Creative Capital is that they are betting on the commercial potential in noncommercial art. This comes at a good moment, because the explosion of cable and the Internet is creating new exhibition and distribution arenas that an artist has to know how to mine. There are also older resources that filmmakers might not know about, which Creative Capital will direct them to.

Cobb, for example, made an experimental documentary called *Don't Hurry Back*, which is included in a film catalog called *Viewing Race* published by National Video Resources in New York. Cobb says, "[*Viewing Race*] is a very ambitious project. They send this catalog out to libraries, art organizations, and so forth. People can order our tapes directly. They pay the artists, and then we pay National Video Resources a distribution percentage. It's been very fruitful for me. I've gotten a lot of orders from public libraries, so I know these tapes are not just sitting there. They are in libraries, and they're being viewed." Todd Downing, 26, who received $6,000 for his animated short *Jeffrey's Hollywood Screen Trick*, sold his first film, *Dirty Baby Does Fire Island*, to Channel 4 in England and was able to recoup a portion of his investment. This is the kind of outlet to which Creative Capital might be able to introduce filmmakers. Nerwen says of her current project, "I am interested in branching out a bit, outside

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of art audiences, and I think that Creative Capital will be interested in helping me do that."

Beyond its logistical innovations, Creative Capital's most striking quality is the kind of work it supports. While the defunding of the NEA was in large part due to controversial art—most notoriously that of Karen Finley, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Andres Serrano—Creative Capital is most interested in works that are on the cutting edge. As Lerner explains, "We are looking for work that's trying to explore its art form, work that's really contemporary, that's really engaged with what's happening now." She goes on, "We're probably not interested in the biography of a former president. I'm glad people are out there doing them, but that's just not our territory."

HOW IT WORKS

1) Creative Capital and the artist create a Final Budget Project (including artist fees).
2) The percentage of Creative Capital's contribution to the total budget is calculated.
3) All revenues generated up to that Final Budget go directly to cover project costs.
4) For revenues in excess of that figure, Creative Capital receives the percentage it contributed to the budget, until it has recouped its actual dollar contribution.
5) After this, the percentage of project proceeds it is entitled to will be halved.

The artists working with Creative Capital feels vindicated in some ways by this attitude. Downing, for example, is fed up with what he calls "Sundancey, boring films" made by privileged filmmakers with nothing to say. "For some reason," he says, "most of the major film festivals seem to favor and reward this blandness, sending the message to filmmakers that creativity and risk-taking will not be rewarded. Creative Capital, whose mission is to fund more challenging projects, will hopefully enable others to create more individualized work and provide a place where creativity will be rewarded."

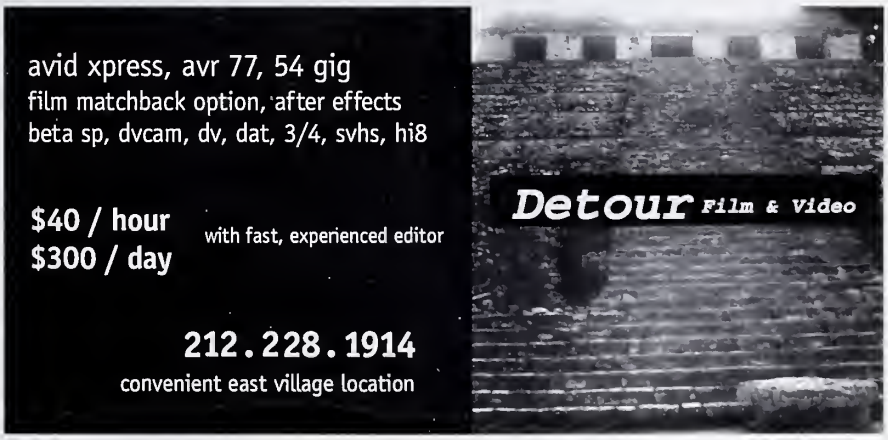
Is Creative Capital's mission naïve and idealistic? No one really knows at this point. While the fund was conceived as a five-year experiment, they are now interested in building an endowment, thanks to the overwhelming response from the press, funders, and the artistic community. Says Lerner, "My feeling is, what if we get to the end of five years and find out that maybe this wasn't such a great idea? The worst thing that will have happened is that we will have given a lot of artists a lot of money."

Andrea Meyer writes for IndieWIRE, the New York Post, *and Edificerex.com*









An American Inspector

FREDERICK WISEMAN

talks about Belfast, Maine, his brush with Hollywood, his films' length, and his brand new role as a theater director.

BY DEIRDRE BOYLE

FREDERICK WISEMAN IS A LION OF THE AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY film. This February, he came down to New York from his home in Boston for a 30-year retrospective of his films, sponsored by the Film Society at Lincoln Center and Human Rights Watch Film Festival, and for the PBS broadcast of his latest film, *Belfast, Maine*. This interview, recorded at WNET/Channel 13, was punctuated by mutual coughing—a legacy of the flu of '99—and much laughter. What follows is an excerpt from a wide-ranging two-hour conversation about the pleasures and problems of making movies independently, plus some surprises. [For a transcript of the full interview, go to www.aivf.org/the_independent.]

I gather you call your films "reality fictions."

Well, I did that as a joke. That was around the time *In Cold Blood* came out, and there was all this gibberish about nonfiction fiction. And also because the term "cinema vérité" is really pompous and meaningless. So as a joke, I said my films were "reality fiction." And some people picked that up. But I think they are movies.

People compare your work to Zola, Dreiser, Swift. In *Belfast, Maine* you give us Melville. The high school teacher talks about Ahab and his pursuit of great leviathans armed only with spears and harpoons. Is this you, the filmmaker, tackling American institutions?

Moby Dick and *The Confidence Man* are two of my favorite novels. I really don't like to offer interpretations of sequences in the movies.

So often in your films there is a character who says something and the penny drops; you say, "A-ha, I know what this film is really about." I had that feeling about the teacher speaking about Ahab, his comments about the tragic working-class hero who pursues his destiny to the limits of his power and destroys himself; that this was somehow an expression of these stoic New Englanders who are determined to survive in the face of everything that is there—the terrible beauty of nature, the dishevelment of American industry and social structures. When you're there with your sound boom recording, do you know in that moment that this is one of those sequences you will build upon?

Absolutely. I hadn't even met that teacher. I walked into that classroom, and he started talking about *Moby Dick*, and I knew that I'd led a clean and virtuous life. That the Lord was on my side! Sure. No question about a sequence like that. I didn't know exactly how I was going to use it, but I knew that it was a key sequence.

***Belfast, Maine* seems to recapitulate many of your films. Did you set out to create a culminative film or did it happen along the way?**

It did occur to me. A small city or a town like Belfast is a big subject. When the subject is a community, the way to approach it is not as apparent as, say, when you go to a welfare center or a hospital in New York. A welfare center is all in one building, and anything that goes on in the building is fair game for the film. But Belfast has 6,400 people. So I thought of looking at Belfast through the institutions that were the subject of my other films—hospitals, police,



Frederick Wiseman has been making films on the institutions of the American 20th century for 34 years. His latest is the four-hour *Belfast, Maine*, recently broadcast on PBS.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ZIPPORAH FILMS.

welfare, etc. which exist everywhere. In addition to referring to the other films, it helped me decide what and where to shoot.

Someone has called this your *Nashville*—an interesting analogy that again pushes a fictional connection.
Well, all my films have been cut like *Nashville*, even before *Nashville* was made.

Over the years the people in your films seem to have become more characters and less figures. Is that just my imagination, or is that something you've been thinking about consciously?
I am not sure I know what you mean. There are really very few movies in which the same people are in more than one scene. It's true of some; for example, the Abbot is in a lot of scenes in *Essene*. It depends on the subject. Some of the doctors are in many scenes in *Near Death*.

Doctor Taylor—I feel I know him. And Mr. Gavin, Mr. Sperazzo—to me they're characters more than, say, the people in *Titicut Follies* or in *High School*.
It may be a function of the length of the films. It's also a function of the different situations. In *Near Death*, because the people are dying and are surrounded by their families and doctors and nurses and people who care about them, there are more scenes with the same people and the viewer gets to know more about them. In *Titicut Follies*, there is not the same opportunity to learn about the inmates because no one is dealing with their emotional or physical needs. The difference is a response to the different situations, as is the length of the film.

You've worked with maybe six cameramen over the years: Richard Leiterman shot *High School*; John Marshall, of course, did *Titicut Follies*. William Brayne worked with you for almost 10 years, and now you're working with John Davey. How do you go about finding a cameraman?
I look at their previous work. Given the technical competence, the most important thing is how we get along. We need to be able to work together 12-14 hours a day for eight weeks. I try to work with someone who I think will be responsive to what I want to do and accomplish.

Leiterman's camerawork is so different from Davey's, yet every film is clearly yours, so you've always been doing a lot of directing. Does that happen in those midnight conversations looking at the rushes? Is it happening on the fly?
We spend a lot of time talking about the shooting. We have signals that we use during the shooting, and we watch rushes together almost every night.

How do you go about editing?
I look at the silent rushes during the shooting—usually there's about a three-day delay for the processing. When I come back from shooting I



Deer hunters in ***Belfast.***



One of several sequences in ***Belfast, Maine*** that recalls an earlier film, in this case ***Near Death.***

"The fact that people can react to the sequences or to a film in a different way—some people may think it's a failure of the film. To me, it's a confirmation, because it means that the film represents the complexity of the event."



At work in *Belfast*: the mesmerizing cannery assembly line and out on high waters.

usually go through all the synched up rushes. Then I have a log which summarizes each shot. Each shot is given a number. Then I simply start editing sequences that interest me, because in the beginning it's hard to get into the material. Then over a period of eight or nine months—in the case of *Belfast, Maine* it was about nine months—I edit all the sequences that might make it into the final film. At the end of nine months, I have hung on the wall or piled on the table beside me all the sequences that I might include in the final film in some usable form. For example, the sardine factory took me five weeks to edit. The original rushes were about four hours. The sequence is nine minutes long and there are two hundred and seventy shots. Alternatively, some sequences I can edit in a morning. These are examples of the two extremes.

I don't think about structure before I have edited all the possible sequences. I have a hard time thinking about structure in the abstract. I have to discover how sequences actually fit together. I can only do this by trying out different possibilities. After whatever period of time it takes for me to edit all the sequences into a usable form, I then work out the structure in two or three days. The first assembly is usually 20 or 30 minutes longer than the final film.

After that, it's a question of working on the internal rhythm within a sequence and the rhythm between sequences. For example, a sequence which I've initially edited with a beginning, middle, and an end may not need the beginning any more because the same information may be in another sequence. So I can shorten the sequence. Also I am very concerned with transitions between sequences. This is an important aspect of the film's rhythm. For example, the transitions serve a variety of purposes in *Belfast*—rhythm, geography, landscape, the class structure, and silence. The last few months of the editing are primarily trying to pare the material down working on the internal rhythm of a sequence and the rhythm between sequences.

Have you ever thought of video?

Of course I've thought of video. But I've rejected it so far. I still think film looks a lot better than video. If I find that I'm not able to raise the money to shoot in film, I'll have to change, but at the moment, I don't want to. I don't like editing video. It is also very expensive to switch over. I have my own little system with the Steenbeck and I like it and am familiar with it. Working on the Steenbeck gives me time to try and think about the material. But it may be that I'm just too old-fashioned to change my ways.

Let's talk about funding. You had two five-year contracts with public television back in the '70s, and then you had a MacArthur grant, which I assume helped

get the films made until the late '80s. What is your relationship now with PBS, and how do you get the money to make your films?

Well, I have different relationships with different entities in public television. You need a sponsoring station to be on PBS. The first film I had on public television was *Law and Order*. That was '69. That was for PBL—it was the forerunner of PBS, Public Broadcast Laboratory. Channel 13 has done them all since then. I have a very good relationship with WNET/Channel 13, PBS, and CPB. Channel 13 sponsors the film on the network, does the publicity, and pays for the transfer costs. But until recently they never put up any production money. I'm very grateful for what they do.

About five or six years ago, I did an analysis, which I think is still accurate—of the percentage of money that came from one or another branch of public television, from CPB, PBS, or WNET. I think 20 percent of the budget for all my movies comes from a public television source. This refers to the total budget of all my films since 1966. For that 10 year period from 1971-81, the money came in a Ford Foundation grant to Channel 13 that was ear-marked for me. Before then and since, I raise money on a film-by-film basis. I used the MacArthur grant in one way or another for nine movies. It wasn't enough to make any one movie, but I kept turning it over and using it for different purposes or research or shooting a film before I had raised the full production budget. It meant that if I wanted to do a film, I could shoot it and then raise the money as the production and editing progressed. The MacArthur grant made it possible for me to make a number of films that I would not have otherwise made.



"The sardine factory took me five weeks to edit. Some sequences I could do in a morning. Those are the two extremes. I don't think about structure before editing the sequences, because I have a hard time thinking about structure in the abstract."

There are only eight or 10 consistent sources in the world for money for documentary work. In addition to PBS and CPB, the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities, there are three or four foundations—Ford, MacArthur, Diamond, Soros—that occasionally put up money for production. There used to be a lot more in the '70s and '80s, and then they stopped because filmmakers either didn't finish the films or they made films different from the ones they said they were going to make. Now even the big foundations don't have specific money for filmmaking. There is a possibility of a grant if the subject happens to match a programmatic interest of the foundation. The other sources for occasional funding are the BBC or Channel Four or LaSept/Arte in France. There are other foundations which make grants from time to time, but not on a regular basis.

What do you think the future is for your films on television?

As long as I have the support of Channel 13, PBS, and CPB, I think I will be able to continue. I will still have to raise the money. PBS and Channel 13 have been extremely generous with me about the length of the films, arranging for the publicity, and getting me good broadcast times.

Do you feel you can count on the NEA and NEH in the future?

I think it's a mistake to count on anything. Actually I applied to NEH only once, for *Near Death*. And they gave me the production budget. The NEA has been generous to me, giving me grants for a number of films, and I am very grateful for their assistance.

Have you ever premiered your films as theatrical features?

Belfast, Maine was shown last fall for a couple of weeks in a theater in Los Angeles because I was thinking about qualifying it for the Academy Awards. But there's a rule that if it's on television within six months of its release, it's not eligible. When the airdate from PBS for *Belfast* came down for February 4, I had to make a decision. Since February 4 coincided with the retrospective of my films at Lincoln Center, I thought it made sense. The film was then not eligible for the Academy. Some of the others have been shown in theaters in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, and occasionally elsewhere. It is difficult and expensive to have a theatrical release.

But that ruled *Belfast* out-of-competition. Is that why you've never received an Oscar?

For many years I didn't even apply. The selection process has been changed and I will probably submit a film when I can.

I'd like you to talk about the ambiguity in your films.

I try not to have ideological blinders on when I do a movie, because it seems to me you miss too much. I don't like to make a film that sets out to illustrate a thesis. The point of view of the film is something I discover as a result of the shooting and editing and trying to think about the experience I have had at the place and the material. As that well-known philosopher Samuel Goldwyn said: "If you have a message, send a telegram." I think the point of view of my films is relatively clear, but it is expressed indirectly through the structure. The fact that people can react to the sequences or to a film in a different ways is a confirmation to me that the film suggests the complexity and ambiguity of the subject.

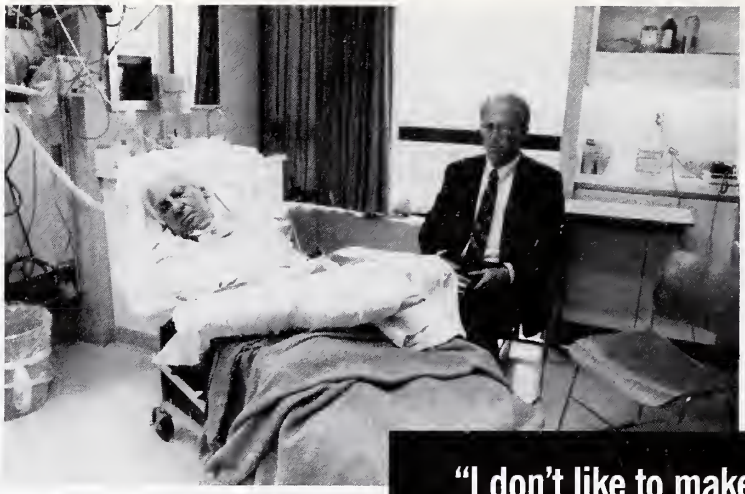
High School, a funny, but ultimately sad film, was shown in a theater in Boston. One of the people who came to see it was Louise Day Hicks, who was a very conservative member of the Boston School Committee and the Boston City Council. When somebody introduced me to her after the screening, she said, "Oh, Mr. Wiseman. It was a wonderful film. I wish we could have schools like that in Boston." But, I didn't consider that a failure of the film. It's an illustration that reality is complicated, even for a film that is in many ways as didactic as *High School*. Mrs. Hicks was just on the other side of all the value issues.

I hope that my films have become less didactic and succeed in pre-

senting the complexity and ambiguity of ordinary experience. That, for me, is the great subject.

Do you ever keep in touch with the people in your films?

A little bit, but not much. I try when I'm making the films to be friendly. However, I try to avoid the instant intimacy routine which may suggest the possibility of life-long friendship. I know that's not going to be the case. I don't want to deceive people. The only film that I've made close and permanent friends through is *La Comédie Française*.



From Wiseman's 1989 film *Near Death*.

"I don't like to make a film that sets out to illustrate a thesis. As that well-known philosopher Samuel Goldwyn said: 'If you have a message, send a telegram.'"

Where did that film come from? It's the only film that doesn't deal with some aspect of American life.

For years I wanted to do a film about a theater company. There is no permanent repertory theater in the U.S. with the stature of the Comédie Française. And I thought about the Comédie Française maybe twelve to fifteen years ago and mentioned that to a friend of mine in France. She knew some French producers. And when she was talking to them one day, she said, "You know, Fred Wiseman has always wanted to do a film about the Comédie Française." And they said, "Oh, we'd like it too." She called and asked me if I was still interested. I then met the director of the Comédie and he said, "Fine."

The director gave me permission immediately. I also had to get the permission of all the unions. I spent three months visiting the Comédie Française every day in an informal way, talking with the stagehands, electricians, costume designers and other workers. At the end of the three months, they voted to give me permission.

You pretty much nailed French culture the way you've been nailing American culture all these years. Certainly the French critics seemed to agree that you did "get it." Where does your familiarity with a very different institutional world—and not just the French theater—come from?

The real answer to your question is, I don't know. But I lived in Paris for two years from '56 to '58, and I visit France often, but the way anybody visits—restaurants, theaters, movies, and walking around. I had no real experience with French bureaucratic culture. I had access to all the various activities at the Comédie, and I tried to be alert to the implications of what I was seeing and hearing. I'm going back to France in February to direct a play.

Have you ever done this before?

Yes, at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge. At the Comédie Française I'm directing a monologue. It's based on a chapter from a novel by Vassily Grossman, *Life and Fate*, a great novel about Russia from the revolution to the Battle of Stalingrad written in the early '50s. Grossman was a famous Russian war correspondent who fell out of favor after the war because he was a Jew. Then he started to write real novels as opposed to socialist realist novels. The chapter that I've selected is a letter a Russian Jewish woman doctor writes to her son a couple of nights before she knows she's going to be taken out of the small town where she lives and shot by the Germans. The monologue is a recapitulation of her life.

Do you want to do more directing?

Perhaps, but I still like making documentaries.

You've made one fiction film, *Seraphita's World*, and you began in film by producing *The Cool World* for Shirley Clarke. What happened to that impulse to make fiction films?

Well, I've written the scripts for a couple of features, but I couldn't get the money. I did a script based on Anne Tyler's novel *Celestial Navigation*, which I think is a great novel and would make a good movie. Do you know the book? It's about a fat, shy artist who runs a rooming house that he inherits from his mother, and he falls in love with a woman who comes to live there with her daughter. The artist is a lot like Joseph Cornell; he makes things out of fragments. It would make a very sad-funny movie. I couldn't get the money because the industry—so called—thought it was too "soft".

I also wrote the original script for *Stunt Man*. I was hired by William Castle to write and direct that, and then they didn't like my script. The film made had nothing to do with the script I wrote. The reason I haven't pursued these things more vigorously is, I have a hard time dealing with the scene in Los Angeles. And I didn't like the idea of sitting around wasting time waiting for something to happen. With documentaries I can make them happen because they are totally dependent on my initiative. I don't know even if I had persisted in Hollywood, whether I would have succeeded, but it wasn't worth the effort.

I want to ask about the length of the films. For a lot of people a firewall comes up. "I don't want to watch it. It's six hours long. Who the hell does he think he is making such long films?" What do you think about this issue of length?

I feel an obligation to the people who have given me permission to record aspects of their life. They have taken a risk and have demonstrated a certain amount of trust in giving me access to their lives. I feel a moral commitment to try to be fair in the way I present them. Another aspect is the need to provide the context. I have deliberately picked complex subjects and I need time to properly present their complexity. In *Belfast*, even at four hours, there are lots of things that are left out. I don't make the films long to be perverse. My primary goal is to make something that works as a film and that is responsive and fair to the subject matter. I feel an obligation to the people, to the material, and to myself.

Deirdre Boyle teaches documentary film in the Graduate Media Studies Program at the New School University and is a long-time contributor to The Independent.

Lessons in Salesmanship

Advice from the Other Side of the Pitching Table

BY DAVID HOUTS



THE MOMENT OF TRUTH HAS ARRIVED. Months, if not years, of research and development, proposal writing, and searching for compelling characters boil down to the 30-minute audience you now have with a commissioning editor. Or maybe it's just five minutes in front of a dozen broadcasters at a public pitch session. All eyes turn towards you. Your mouth goes dry, your mind goes blank. You cannot begin to articulate the compelling vision you have for your documentary. You find yourself mumbling something about feeling like a character in a Kafka novel. Then you hear yourself laughing too loudly. You black out, only to return to consciousness with one of the most powerful commissioning editors in American documentary television fanning you with your unread treatment. A fracas ensues when you try to stagger back to the table. You are escorted from the building by security.

Suddenly, you awake with a start. Your pitch session doesn't begin for another six hours. This leaves you with plenty of time to get it together, and you know you'll be great . . . but then again, who couldn't use a little help?

Pitching a proposal for a documentary is a very stressful undertaking, even for the most seasoned filmmakers. So many variables are at play, and so few lie within your control. Filmmakers often feel they are unable to communicate their vision effectively, while broadcasters often find themselves confronted with projects they would never take and proposals that fail to communicate their own potential.

So in the interest of helping filmmakers improve their "pitch experience," I decided to turn to some experts. Who better to give pointers about pitching than those on the receiving end? I spoke with a half-dozen commissioning editors, the people who get thousands of pitches every year and who play an integral part in deciding which films will and won't get funded. They program the whole spectrum of broadcast documentaries—from highly personal and observational films to historical and reportage-based programs. Some commission all of their programming from established producers and solo filmmakers, while others get most of their films from substantial in-house production teams and large production companies and only occasionally work with indies.

In this very unscientific survey, I asked what makes pitches good and bad, what are the most common mistakes, and why commissioning editors open the door to an onslaught of ideas-obsessed filmmakers. The reassuring thing about their answers was the redundancy, giving credence to the notion that there *is* such a thing as an objectively good pitch. But at the same time, I was disconcerted by how simple the basic pitching flaws sounded when spoken out loud. Is it possible that the same mistakes happen over and over again, regardless of time, space, and the filmmakers' grapevine? Evidently so. Therefore, at the risk of sounding simplistic, I have included the whole range of comments, from the obvious to the profound.

Remember the big picture.

THE SYNOPSIS:

There is a tremendous amount of luck involved in getting a project commissioned. So many factors beyond your control are in play: Have they spent their money for the year already? Have they recently commissioned a similar project? Have they already made commitments to the limited number of indies they can manage this year?

What's more, broadcasters have a strong tendency to prefer filmmakers with an established track-record, often production companies or indies with whom they have an on-going relationship. That doesn't mean you can't break in, but you should remember what you're up against. Commissioning editors know from experience that these producers will deliver their films on time, on budget, and of the appropriate creative standard. But that doesn't stop them from searching for new talent and ideas wherever they can be found.

Perhaps the most pervasive theme running through the interviews is that against all the odds and obstacles, the greatest strength indies have is the passion and originality of their stories and storytelling. While the vast majority of nonfiction TV programming is highly formulaic, the appeal of the truly original is drawing more mainstream broadcasters into the independent filmmakers' world.

That's the good news. What dedicated filmmakers may not want to hear is that, from the broadcasters' perspective, there's a fine line between passionate persistence and annoying obsession. As Nancy Abraham cautions, "Of course we want our filmmakers to be passionate about their project, but you can't get too invested in one single objective." So if it's a commission you want, it's good to know when to change horses. Particularly because today it's still a buyer's market.

THE SOUND BITES:

Jan Rofekamp: "There has been an enormous growth in the number of people who actually make documentaries, but I haven't seen the number of slots growing. As someone said at IFFCON this year, if you have a nice little film, it is almost automatically unsellable. 'Nice little' isn't enough any more; it has to be unique. So, to borrow the phrase from Hollywood, remember your USP—Unique Selling Point.

"There has been a tremendous growth in cable and satellite for series—the 'volume' or 'genre' market. But not for one-off films. That said, last year I thought I had seen all of the subjects possible. And now I have twenty new films, and a very strong bunch. So I'm not pessimistic."

Know to whom you pitch.

THE SYNOPSIS:

Know the basics: the commissioning editor's name and how to pronounce it, the person's title, and their actual responsibilities in the development process. Know what kinds of subjects and styles the broadcaster is interested in. It will save everyone a great deal of time and embarrassment. Filmmakers should be aware that whomever you pitch initially is only the first stage of an internal process at that broadcaster; that person will most likely not be the ultimate arbiter of your



project, even if they are very senior. They still have bosses who have bosses, and often they make group decisions at big meetings where lots of projects will be discussed. Part of your objective is to win them over to your project, to make them your advocate within their organization. It's hard to do that if you haven't taken the time to understand how their organization works.

It's also wise to do some research and learn what their typical budget is for a commissioned documentary. Often broadcasters pay within a well-defined range, and asking for the contents of Fort Knox won't help your credibility.

THE SOUND BITES:

Jennifer Hyde: "If you are wondering what CNN does, find out what is on the air and watch our shows. I don't want to feel like I'm one of many, on the list somewhere between A&E and Discovery—which is not to say that you shouldn't have your projects on other people's desks, but I want there to be a real shot of us doing it together. Don't call me to pitch an animal circus show."

Mary Ellen Iwata: "We have a little bit of a problem with our name, because 'The Learning Channel' implies learning and education, and we have nothing to do with either. It's first and foremost entertainment. We looking for strong stories that connect our viewer to the human experience, mainly in the areas of history, science, pop culture, human behavior, or action adventure. It always comes back to the human experience. I've had producers say things like, 'It's very educational; it's for high school,' and I'm like 'Whoa, I think you haven't watched our network.' And that's a major no-no."

Alon Orstein: "At PBS we look at what is beyond the broadcast component. Education is a big part of our mission. A project that comes to us should include what is in the outreach component—what the web site will look like, what the impact in schools will be. We want producers to think about projects in a holistic sense and to be able to articulate that larger vision."

Be professional, and know your own strengths.



THE SYNOPSIS:

It isn't just art; there's commerce involved. So all those Sales 101 basics apply: Look people in the eye, use their name, speak clearly, respect your customer's time, don't sound like you are reading or regurgitating a memorized sales pitch, even if you have described the project hundreds of times before. If you haven't, take the time to rehearse. After all, you're asking for large sums of money. Beyond a firm handshake and great style, your pitch should make it clear that you will be able to deliver the "product" on time and on budget. And that really boils down to having a clear conception of what the film will be.

THE SOUND BITES:

Nancy Abraham: "A three- to five-page proposal on plain paper is perfectly adequate. I have proposals on my desk in funny shapes that I can't file and clutter up my office. And they don't contribute to my understanding of the idea."

Jan Rofekamp: "I've been doing a lot of pitch training courses and panels. Half of the people in them just can't pitch. Of the half that can, half are bad in public and great in private. Figure out if you are the best person to pitch your idea. Are you good in a one-to-one pitch and less good in a public pitch, whereas your producer shines with a big audience? And it isn't just about technique, it's about focus and content. I've seen so many people losing themselves within 30 seconds in the content of their own film and straying from a straight line. It's unbelievable. The thing is, how many second chances to do you have?"

Have a good hook.



THE SYNOPSIS:

The first couple of minutes are key. The story is everything. The backstory and context should follow from your hook, otherwise you are in danger of stimulating a discussion that is not about your film.

THE SOUND BITES:

Jan Rofekamp: "The hook is the idea of the film. At the end of the day, your film will always end up somewhere on television. So imagine your film on television, then think of the page in *TV Guide* where your film is mentioned. What attracts the eye of the viewer is what will hook the buyer."

Jennifer Hyde: "Cut to the chase. I'm not going to say, 'Give me 25 words' and walk out the door, but I need to know what you're aiming at."

Mary Ellen Iwata: "We get a lot of pitches, thousands in fact. And there aren't many original ideas, but I have to be able to get it really quickly and understand what it's about. Then I'll follow up—'Are you going to tell the story?,' and all that."

Alon Orstein: "You really need to communicate what the story is. A lot of times you'll get 'This show is about life' and lots of ethereal, vague ideas without much thought being given to the execution."

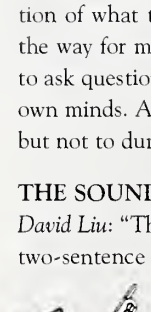
Be succinct, yet specific.

THE SYNOPSIS:

Answer the basic questions early on. But come in prepared to talk about all aspects of your film in greater detail. Think of your presentation as a pyramid. You start at the top with a succinct summary, then add layers of information. No matter where you cut off, the shape of the pyramid will still be apparent. Make the basics clear early in the pitch: how long the film will be, the status of rights, questions of access, an appropriate budget, etc. This shows you have considered all of these eventualities and also that you have a fully realized conception of what the production will be like. More importantly, it clears the way for more of a dialogue with the commissioner and gets them to ask questions as they try to recreate your vision of the film in their own minds. And it is always best to come with everything you can—but not to dump it all on their desk at once.

THE SOUND BITES:

David Liu: "The best pitch reveals itself layer by layer. You hook with a two-sentence concept of story and theme. If I'm interested in the topic and the concept has potential to be good television, then I would pursue it further, [asking] what your POV is and going on to the deeper layers."



Jennifer Hyde: "I'm trying to get the answers to three questions when I get a pitch: Why you? Why this? Why here? But come with more materials, rather than less. Come with the one page, the five page, the 25 pages of

research, resumes, demo reels. So when we get that far, you have it ready."

Nancy Abraham: "We're less interested in [your telling us] an essay about the issue, and more in the specifics—who are the characters, what is the access, what does one anticipate the action to be—and how you'll put those elements in the context of a larger issue. With verité, it is really all about the plan for the observation."

Amy Briamonte: "After the idea, we look at access and characters. There has to be a really good reason for us to work with someone new because of the ease of working with people who understand the game. What it boils down to is access."

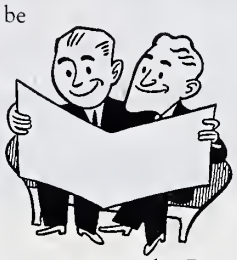
The development process is a dialectic.

THE SYNOPSIS:

It is this very dialectic which commissioning editors most enjoy. Remember, you have your talents, and they have theirs. They know their audience better than you ever will, and you must be prepared to respect their input on how best to reach that audience. Commissioners want to be involved in the shaping of the project to varying degrees—and it's helpful to know who's more hands-on and who takes a laissez-faire approach. But they all love the passion of independent filmmakers, although not all broadcast auteurial films, and none want to work with megalomaniacs.

THE SOUND BITES:

Amy Briamonte: "You want the person to be flexible and able to take your network into account. You want them to be willing to collaborate with you on shaping the program. We need to know that this will be viewer-friendly for an A&E audience. That being said, we definitely appreciate passion, and we do look for producers who have a very strong vision We're not going to do all the work."



Alon Orstein: "Funding documentaries for any venue is tricky. But what PBS offers filmmakers is lots of latitude, as far as the editorial side, and eyeballs. We are the best way for people to maximize the impact of their work."

Editors, deep down, really want to say 'yes.'

THE SYNOPSIS:

The reason these people do their job is because they love the work that filmmakers do, and enjoy being involved in the creative process. They see themselves as the allies of the documentary maker, not the judge.

THE SOUND BITES:

Nancy Abraham: "It's hard to say 'no' to people, especially to good and worthy projects that we can't take on. The other side of the job is that when you get your mail or faxes, the potential is always there for another exciting or energizing idea."

Mary Ellen Iwata: "TLC is a hungry mouth to feed; we have a lot of hours on the schedule to fill. What I particularly like about independents is their passion. I always learn something."

David Liu: "ITVS is unique; we follow projects through from the pitch to the web site. With new technologies on the horizon, there are always new challenges. And that's what makes it so rewarding."

Jennifer Hyde: "One of the most satisfying aspects of my job is to work with a filmmaker to pump up their pitch. It is so rewarding to see the pitch succeed and then the show succeed. It's like recognizing the diamond in the rough."

Get your foot in the door.

Because of the rise of pitching conferences, the fairytale of "after the brilliant pitch, they all lived happily ever after . . ." seems to loom large these days. In fact, the pitch is still the beginning of the process for broadcasters. As Jan Rofekamp says, "The only purpose of your pitch is to get a second meeting, and if you get that, your first big task is done."

David Houts is an independent producer and director in New York. His production company, Hybrid Films, has produced projects for A&E, Court TV, BBC, Channel 4 [UK], Channel 5 [UK], and Arte.



The Cast of Characters

Nancy Abraham - Vice President of Original Programming and Documentaries at HBO. HBO produces 15 to 18 original documentaries per year and acquires many more for broadcast on Cinemax and the other HBO channels.

Amy Briamonte - Director of Documentary Programming for A&E. Notwithstanding the hundreds of hours of factual programming A&E produces every year, it develops, commissions, and oversees just 10 to 12 feature-length documentary specials each year.

Jennifer Hyde - Director of Development, CNN productions. CNN transmits over 30 hours per year of original documentaries.

Mary Ellen Iwata - Vice President of Development & Special Projects for The Learning Channel (TLC), one of the Discovery Networks. TLC airs over 1,000 hours of factual programs in primetime every year, commissioning hundreds of new productions annually.

David Liu - Executive in Charge of Programming and Development, ITVS. The Independent Television Service (ITVS) mandate is to fund and present programming that involves creative risks and addresses the needs of underserved audiences while granting artistic control to the independent producer. This translates into over 50 projects in production at any one time, which range from childrens' series to dramas to documentaries, all of which are offered to PBS.

Alon Orstein - Director of Program Management of PBS. PBS is still the largest broadcaster of the work of independent documentary filmmakers in America, commissioning original productions through established strands like *Frontline*, *The American Experience*, and *American Masters* as well as occasional short series and single productions. And, of course, PBS is also the home of *P.O.V.* and *Independent Lens*, both largely acquisitions series.

Jan Rofekamp owns and operates Films Transit, which specializes in the worldwide release and marketing of high-profile feature documentaries. He has been distributing to broadcasters in America and Europe for almost 30 years, and has been a moderator of the Documentary Forum in Amsterdam, one of the most important open pitch sessions. (In the name of full disclosure, the author recently made two films for Amy Briamonte at A&E, one of which is distributed by Rofekamp.)

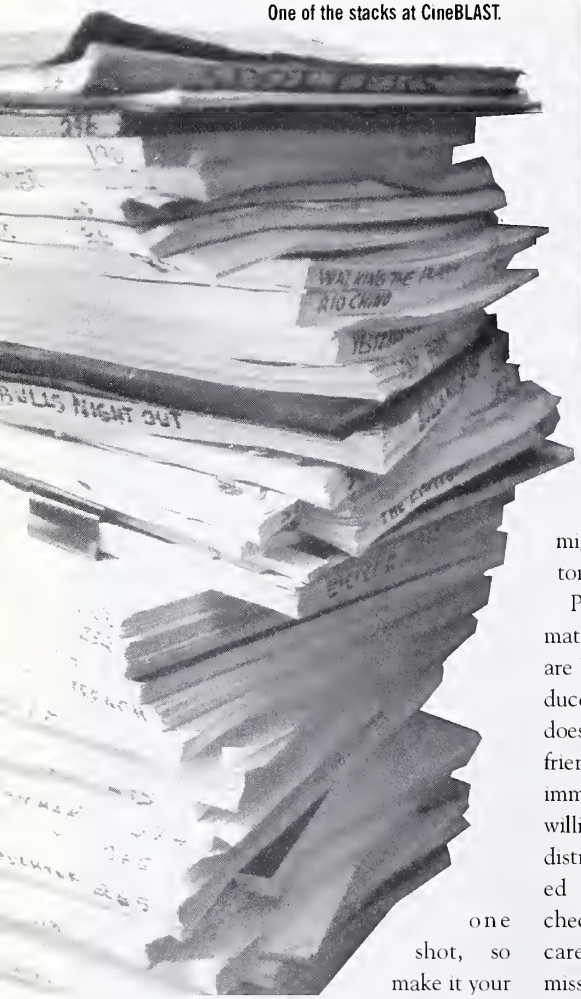
How to Submit

Got a screenplay ready? Really ready? Take a producer's advice before sending your baby off into the world.

BY GILL HOLLAND

SO YOU'VE FINISH A SCRIPT AND THINK IT'S A work of genius. We know you get a rush when you type 'The End,' but don't go running off to the mailbox with a dozen unsolicited copies. There are several steps to take that will help you look more professional and increase the likelihood of having your script read in a timely fashion.

First, make sure your script is the final draft. There's an industry saying that you only get one shot, so make it your best. Before handing over your precious 110-page package to a producer, give it to 15 people unrelated to you who will not worry about hurting your feelings with harsh criticism.



Make me notice you: One of the stacks at CineBLAST.

Do not send rewrites after the script is in the producer's hands. I frequently get panicked calls from writers who ask, "You didn't read my script yet, did you?"—this coming from someone who a week earlier was hounding me to read it. When I say, "No, I have not," they happily rush over with a revised draft. This sends the wrong signal. I don't know whether to take the time to read that one, because if they modified it once, they might again. The new version goes to the bottom of the pile.

If you're told, "it's a pass," you can see this as more of a statement on quantity than quality. There are over 25,000 scripts registered with the WGA every year, and only about 500 films released yearly. Most indie producers do not produce more than four films a year.

Presentation, formatting, and spelling *do* matter. One hundred loose-leaf, unbound pages are hard to keep together, especially if the producer reads on a train or away from a desk. It doesn't matter if the producer is your best friend. If he likes the script, he'll want to give it immediately to a colleague, who may not be willing to cut you the slack. In addition, do not distract them from the story with easily corrected misspellings. Use your computer's spell check. Then do it the old-fashioned way—by a careful read-through—because spell check misses the distinction between there, they're, their, its, it's, to, too, and so on.

Know your pitch cold. Until you get a "real" producer, you the writer must also act as the producer—and think like one. Use the other, non-creative, business side of your brain to think about things like what the poster will look like, how much will it cost, who is the target audience, who are potential actors, etc. Have a one-line pitch, a two-minute pitch, and a 15-minute summary prepared. Producers are always panicked that they might miss out on the next big thing, so they or their staff would never refuse to hear a two-minute pitch if the person on the phone sounds polite. Even though you may feel entitled to speak to the boss directly, always be nice to the assistants. Not only do they have the boss's trust, they probably will be the head of production for Miramax next year. A related tip: the secret to getting people on the phone is calling after 6 p.m., when the assistants have left for the day.

Never send a script unsolicited. Otherwise you're just contributing to the office's recycling pile. Scripts get read if they are recommended by a trusted colleague of the producer, or if the writer has compiled a list of contacts or financial resources available to the eventual production. If a writer says she has a script that Greg Mottola wants to direct, or Bruce Willis wants to do for scale, or Enrique Chediak wants to shoot, or says that her mother owns Bloomingdales and loves investing in movies, that script goes to the top of the pile. If you're a writer with no connections, you must send a query letter. You do not have to fax this or send it overnight, because while it may seem urgent to you, it is not. You are wasting your money and the producer's fax paper.

If the query does not interest a producer, whether because the pitch is not good or it doesn't suit that producer's taste, you should move on. Learn to accept the words "so-and-so did not respond to the material." Trying to convince someone to appreciate something artistic is like arguing politics and religion. It helps to know producers' filmographies, so that you do not send your heart-warming, character-driven, gay coming-of-age story to someone who only produces "tits and guns" movies. Also, do not bother sending a SASE. It just shows you do not know how cluttered and disorganized a production office is, that most producers read

scripts on planes and probably do not bring your SASE with them. Nobody is going to send your script back to you. Do bother, however, to put your name and phone number on the cover page (you would be amazed at how many writers forget), so that if the producer likes your script but has misplaced the cover letter, he knows where to contact you.

If your pitch was good enough to get your script through a production company's door, you should give yourself a little pat on the back. But do not expect anything soon, because it is still a long way to the producer's eyes. Independent production companies get 30 scripts a week. Most producers I know try to read at least 10 scripts a week, but it's hard to keep up. I was recently clearing out my office and found a script of *Judy Berlin*—still unread—that premiered at Sundance 1999. More than once I have read a script, liked it, and called the writer only to find out that it had already been filmed.

Then one day a miracle happens, and the producers read your script. Usually you're told, "it is a pass." To make yourself feel better, you can see this as more of a statement on quantity than quality. The numbers are against you. There are over 25,000 scripts registered with the WGA every year, and only about 500 films released yearly. Most indie producers do not produce more than four films a year. So it's very possible that they have a full slate. It's also possible they think it is "too commercial," "not commercial enough," "not marketable" on some level (most successful independent films have some weird, edgy artistic hook), or does not work with their aesthetic.

However, if the producer sees some talent in your work, you will have a chat. If you're lucky, you may end up adapting a script or doing a writing assignment down the road, or you may get some leads on other producers who are not busy. Never leave a meeting without the number of somebody else to call.

I know the facts and the numbers are depressing, but remember that success is how you define it. Find the balance between doing what you love and what you have to do to survive. The great thing about being a writer is that you can write whenever and wherever you want and it costs nothing. You can always be practicing your craft. Life could be worse; you could be a director who does not write.

Gill Holland started cineBLAST!, produced some award winning films and reads a lot of scripts, but has left unread many more and apologizes for being so depressing but is just trying to be helpful.

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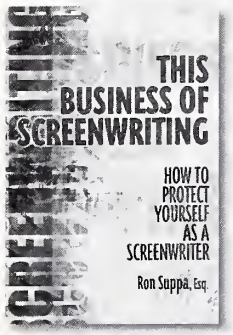
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A Writer's Companion

This Business of Screenwriting: How to Protect Yourself as a Screenwriter, by Ron Suppa, Esq. (Lone Eagle Publishing Co., Los Angeles, 1999; 201 pp.; $19.95)

REVIEWED BY LORRI SHUNDICH



As an aspiring screenwriter who has just relocated to Los Angeles, I'm always hungry for survival tips and optimism. I've read a dozen writing books, taken classes and seminars, and attended film festivals. So I had a special interest in *This Business of Screenwriting: How to Protect Yourself as a Screenwriter*, by Ron Suppa. In addition to teaching screenwriting for 12 years at UCLA Extension, Suppa is an entertainment attorney, film company executive, producer, and produced screenwriter. His stated goal in writing this book was to create "a survival guide to help aspiring and experienced writers alike through that crucial stage where art meets business." Terrific.

After the first few chapters, however, I was skeptical that Suppa was going to tell me anything new. The book begins with sections on Why We Write, Preparing for a Writing Career, and What's L.A. Got to Do with It? I began to wonder what's this got to do with the book's ostensible subject: the business of screenwriting and protecting my work. Suppa goes on to define such basics as the pitch, outline, and treatment, then spec scripts and adaptations. If you've been hit with the screenwriting bug for the first time and are inspired to turn Aunt Gertrude's WWII liaison with a German SS officer into a romantic comedy, this is all valuable information. But if you've already managed to fill a hundred blank pages with a coherent story, this is most likely old news.

And so it continued for nearly a quarter of the book. Chapter 3, for instance, offers a "recipe" for a marketable screenplay in Hollywood (themes from your heart, characters we care about, conflict, etc.), while Chapter 4 does the same for independent film (avoid crowd shots, night scenes, period pieces, etc.).

But then Suppa shifts into business gear. The details of marketing and selling work can make a creative person brain dead, but Suppa offers clear and thorough summaries of every business topic a writer should know. These include writing with a partner; copyrights; representation by agents, lawyers, and managers; guilds; markets and alternative markets; option/purchase agreements; credits; and creative rights. Each topic is broken up into manageable bits of text, into which Suppa interjects witty and entertaining quotes and anecdotes.

Suppa's discussions are supplemented by sample forms, contracts, and up-to-date Writer's Guild compensation charts. He supplies addresses, phone numbers, and web sites, giving you exactly who to contact and where to write, and he includes the complete WGA's list of signatory agents and agencies. Suppa knows just what kind of information a writer needs; he writes that you should keep his book in a handy spot on the shelf.

In the Author's Note, Suppa stipulates that "nothing in this book should be construed as doctrine or legal advice." Be that as it may, his frank and friendly voice succeeded in making this writer smarter about the business of screenwriting. It also supported my notion that driving 3,004.8 miles to get to L.A. wasn't such a crazy idea after all.

Lorri Shundich is a screenwriter in Santa Monica, who is re-re-re-writing her latest screenplay, My Mona Lisa.

See Jane Produce

IFP/West Independent Filmmaker's Manual, by Nicole Shay Laloggia and Eden H. Wurmfeld (Focal Press, USA; 289 pp.; $36.95)

REVIEWED BY DONNA JOYCE



The budding filmmaker will not be the only one to glean valuable information from the *IFP/West's Independent Filmmaker's Manual*, by Nicole Shay Laloggia and Eden H. Wurmfeld, producer and production manager respectively of *Swingers* and co-producers on *See Jane Run*. By no means a dry nor shallow read, it is full of humor, hope, and practicable knowledge, from both the authors and the numerous independents interviewed for the book. Kasi Lemmons, Jon Favreau, Christine Vachon, Ang Lee, Kevin Smith, and Peter Broderick are among the filmmakers and industry mavens who offer advice—often in living color and sound. The book is accompanied by a Mac-compatible CD that features audio, text, and video interviews and allows you to hear the interviewees discoursing on writing, directing, producing, and distribution. It also provides checklists for prethrough postproduction, deal memos, SAG paperwork, and even a Movie Magic plug-in the shape of a Budgeting software demo. What more could you want for $36.95?

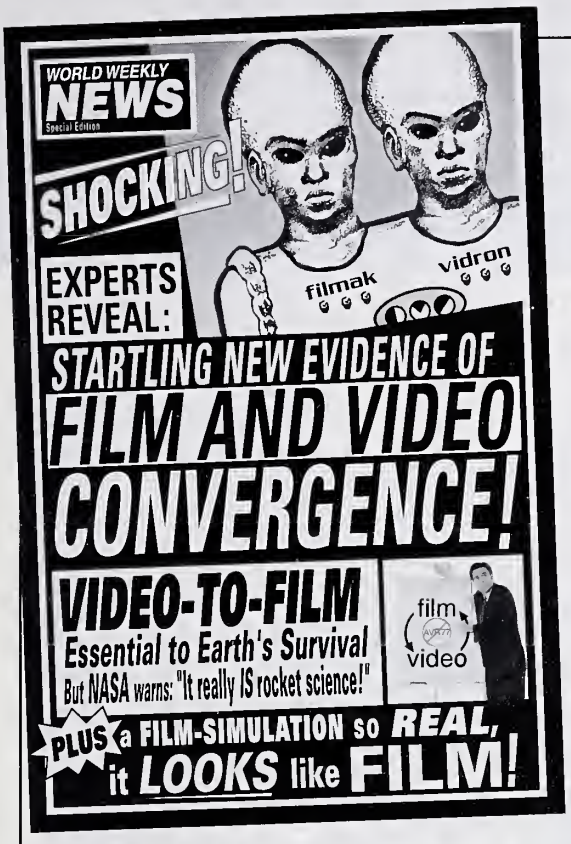
Well, there is more: contracts for optioning/purchasing scripts, breakdowns, shooting and one-liner schedules, a Day out of Days form, four sample budgets for feature films, plus a bevy of boilerplates—including a chart of accounts, product placement release, call sheet, production forms (i.e. petty cash, check requests, raw stock inventory, etc.), location agreement, and sample pickup and return list. These forms, together with their usage explanations, are certainly worth their weight in gold. And they're all in one book.

But don't be hasty and throw away the rest of your filmmaking library. This manual helps make sense of it all. It gives a great head start on the producing process without holding any hands. Laloggia and Wurmfeld assume you are smart enough to make a film—and do the supplemental research needed. They provide a list of reference books, national film organizations, and U.S. distributors (the big ones), along with a tiny festival and market listing.

A future edition of this manual would do well to address a number of topics that were largely omitted. These include clearance rights, fair use, documentaries, grant proposals, and, most importantly, information on lower budget films. Of the four budgets contained in the book (a good thing in itself), only one is for a production below $200,000. This is a serious oversight for any book directed at independent filmmakers.

The authors are enthusiastic filmmakers and encourage anyone eager enough to get in the game. Fortunately, they clearly establish the arduous task ahead and urge aspiring filmmakers to simplify their work by looking before they leap. "Be Prepared" is their motto. If they were indeed Girl Scouts, this mindset has served them well. And it will for other filmmakers with enough courage and passion to take the lessons of this book to heart.

Donna Joyce is a writer and filmmaker based in New York, and is information services assistant at AIVF.



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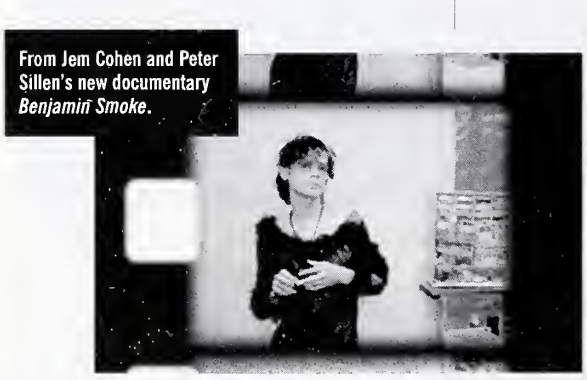
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What is Cowboy Booking?
Cowboy Booking International is a distributor, a distribution partner for producers, a booking agency for international festivals, and a programmer and film buyer for specialized calendar houses.

What's the difference between a distributor and a booking agency?
We play both roles. We are a full-service distributor with films like *West Beirut*, which we released last summer, and which we acquired for all U.S. rights. With other films and projects, we function as a booking agency. We have a catalogue with hundreds of films, licensed by sales agencies like Alliance Atlantis and Good Machine International, to book and service at festivals and cinematheques around the world. We should probably establish a different company to handle our domestic theatrical releases, "Cowboy Films" or something, but we aren't sure anyone really cares.



John Vanco [left] & Noah Cowan



From Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen's new documentary *Benjamin Smoke*.

Who is Cowboy?
John Vanco and Noah Cowan are the co-presidents of the company. John works more closely on domestic distribution and publicity; Noah on the international business and booking The Screening Room's calendar cinema [an arthouse in Lower Manhattan]. Both of us do acquisitions and marketing. Our secret weapon, Director of Communications Kris Percival, oversees all of our publicity efforts for national releases and all the films that are shown at The Screening Room. Cheyenne Martin, International Booker, handles all our overseas festivals requests.

Total number of employees at Cowboy:
Seven (including Noah and John).

How, when, and why did Cowboy come into being?
Noah started Cowboy about five years ago in Toronto to exploit a major change in the international film world. There had just been a massive increase in the number of festivals and cinematheques internationally and a parallel drop in the number of films sold theatrically in all territories. We set up a system to service this new international distribution circuit, signing output deals with several major sales agencies to handle negotiations and delivery to film events in unsold territories. Sales agencies were happy to devolve this business to us and, with a combination of volume and market share of key art films, we are very much the dominant force in this market. This venture combined the two principles that continue to drive this company: finding new ways to get the art films we love seen by more people, and seeking unexplored avenues within existing distribution systems.

The company changed completely when John and Noah teamed up two-and-a-half years ago. The company became aggressively involved in domestic distribution, both in partnership with companies like Quentin Tarantino's Rolling Thunder Pictures and on our own. We began our relationship with The Screening Room almost one year ago to create a new home for specialized art cinema in Manhattan that reflected our aesthetic priorities.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind Cowboy:
See answer above.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Cowboy or its founders and/or key staff?
Noah is a programmer for the Toronto International Film Festival. Part of John's background is at Miramax Films. But John has the artier taste! And that only one of us—Noah—is from Canada.

How many works are in your collection?
We have about 10 films in active distribution in the United States, another 40 films in our domestic catalog, and over 300 titles that we represent internationally.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg by Aviva Kempner, *West Beirut* by Ziad Doueiri, *The Saragossa Manuscript* by Wojciech Has (reissue), *Benjamin Smoke* by Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen (upcoming), *Throne of Death* by Murali Nair (upcoming), *Dear Jesse* by Tim Kirkman, *The Mirror* by Jafar Panahi, *The Beyond* by Lucio Fulci, *Mighty Peking Man* by Ho Meng-Hua, *Hard Core Logo* by Bruce McDonald (the last three with Rolling Thunder Pictures).

What types of works do you distribute?
We distribute feature films of artistic excellence. Period.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
We are not an insanely acquisitions-driven company. Unless we are involved in a special project, we only pick up a few films a year. Usually what happens is that we completely fall in love with a movie, get all excited about it, try and talk our friends at Zeitgeist or Strand into buying it, and then end up buying it ourselves.

Is Cowboy also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
We do not develop or produce films. Occasionally we will work with producers at the very end of their post-production periods to strategize about festivals and non-traditional distribution possibilities.



I want a pony, a fire truck and a crucifix submerged in urine: Tim Kirkman's *Dear Jesse* is directed toward conservative curmudgeon Jesse Helms.

Hammerin' Hank swings for the fences in Aviva Kempner's documentary bio *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*.

A tender, yet creepy moment from Wojciech Has' 1965 film *The Saragasso Manuscript*.

Is there such a thing as a "Cowboy" film?
I don't think our taste is that quantifiable. John and I were both weaned on foreign-language cinema so we have a bias in that area, but we love lots of American films, too!

Best known title in Cowboy's collection:
Different folks identify with different films in our library. Genre fans love *The Beyond*, deadheads dig *Saragossa Manuscript*, and straight-up art films aficionados go for *West Beirut*.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
We develop appropriate, cost-effective marketing strategies based on a film's intrinsic appeal in an effort to find the film's natural core audience and then to conservatively expand the audience within the larger group of specialized/art film fans.

Where do Cowboy titles generally show?
The Screening Room, other arthouses and upscale commercial venues around the country, and at festivals around the world. It's important to us for our films to play as widely (eventually) as possible domestically, so we try to groom non-traditional venues wherever we can find them. We're not dependent, in general, on the chains—we like to explore alternative screening venues.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
For distribution and international festival representation, films must be invited to a major festival for us to consider them. Please email us if you are interested in having us see your film at one of these events. For The Screening Room calendar, we have an open submissions policy but normally do not show work that has not made some kind of critical impact. It's easier for us to work with films that have distributors attached, but we can work directly with producers if they are serious about the commitments necessary (financial, time, effort, materials) to open a film in NYC. Please feel free to email us with any questions about this.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
Micro to medium.

Biggest change at Cowboy recently:
The massive national success of *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* has prompted us to add another staff member.

Most important issue facing Cowboy today:
How to get the art films we love seen by the most people.

Where will Cowboy be ten years from now?
New York City. Probably still on 24th Street. We'll probably be able to afford our rent by then.

You knew Cowboy had made it as a company when . . .
We *will* have made it when we have someone else doing the books.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
There have been a lot. The insane success of *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* in our first two markets, New York and Boston, has given us faith that the documentary is still viable theatrically. A film we have been helping out since postproduction, *Benjamin Smoke*, recently premiered to great acclaim at the Berlin Film Festival. These two things happened at the same time; February was a pretty great month at Cowboy.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Paying to watch them.

Other distributors you admire and why:
We're really in awe of what Strand and Zeitgeist have been able to accomplish over the last 10 years. We have a close, collegial relationship with both companies

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because we feel as though all three companies are fighting for the same kind of cinema. We admire Dan Talbot and Jose Lopez at New Yorker Films not only because John worked there for many years, but because they have stood as a beacon for quality cinema through several decades. Internationally we think Haut et Court in France and Cinemien in The Netherlands are daring, progressive and smart.

The best film you've seen lately was . . .

Strand has a move called *Praise* that we really like. Zeitgeist has the new François Ozon film *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*, which is really sexy. But right now both of us are gushing about *Benjamin Smoke*.

The difference between Cowboy and other distributors of independent films is . . .

We still have the energy of being a youthful company but with strong enough relationships amongst the media and exhibitors to have our films seen by a wide audience. Our relationship with The Screening Room and our international component also make us unique.

If you could give independent filmmakers only one bit of advice it would be to . . .

Not try to copy trends identified in popular independent films. Just make intelligent, aesthetically interesting films that have something to say.

Upcoming titles to watch for:

Benjamin Smoke, to be released this summer in New York and then nationally. Stunning portrait of Atlanta rock singer, Benjamin, a major influence on Patti Smith and Michael Stipe. *Throne of Death* by Murali Nair from India won the Best First Film prize in Cannes last year and opened at New York's Film Forum in April. The film concerns a man on death row who becomes a hero when his village gets electricity for the nation's first electric chair.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one which . . .

We are excited by the possibilities afforded by the burgeoning cable market and, maybe, the Internet. We believe that both of these emerging outlets will continue to be driven by "analog" theatrical marketing skills and will provide more money to do so. Our dream would be to find a way to collaborate with these media to reconstruct the eviscerated arthouse calendar, film society, and non-theatrical college markets in this country.

Famous last words:

Come see us at The Screening Room next time you're in New York.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

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MINNESOTA INDEPENDENT FILM FUND

BY MICHELLE COE



(clockwise from top left): Patrice Snead, Film Funds Director at IFP/North; Georgianna Day, Special Projects Manager, Minnesota Film Board; Jane Minton Executive Director at IFP/North; Randy Adamsick, Minnesota Film Board Executive Director.

The Minnesota Independent Film Fund, c/o IFP/North, 401 North Third St., Ste. 490, Minneapolis, MN 55401; (612) 338-0871; fax: 338-4747; www.ifpnorth.org; Contact: Patrice Snead, Film Funds Director, Georgianna Day, Special Projects Manager, Minnesota Film Board

What is the Minnesota Independent Film Fund?
The Minnesota Independent Film Fund (MIFF) is an innovative program created by the Minnesota Film Board, and administered by Independent Feature Project/North with funds provided by Northwest Airlines (who have a long-time interest in supporting independent filmmaking, in particular in their home market) and the McKnight Foundation to establish a feature film development fund in Minnesota. Specifically, MIFF is an investment in the creative talent of Minnesota filmmakers and provides a unique opportunity to stimulate production of high quality independent feature films.

How, when and why did the Fund come into being?
In 1995 Mike Sweeny, Minnesota CEO of Blockbuster (Minnesota's franchise, not the national company), approached Randy Adamsick, executive director of the Minnesota Film Board, with the idea of creating a program to develop narrative filmmaking in Minnesota. The fund was formerly known as the Blockbuster Fund, but in 1998 was changed to the Minnesota Independent Film Fund. Blockbuster has not been linked in any other way to any of the winning projects, and they have no current role in MIFF.

What the Fund's relationship to IFP/North and the Minnesota Film Board?
IFP/North administers the preliminary process of MIFF, which involves the application process, the panel selection and review process, and the project evaluations received by applicants and award recipients. Minnesota Film Board special projects manager Georgianna Day handles the second portion, which includes coordinating the national Steering Committee, acting as liaison between recipients and the Steering Committee and other industry professionals, administering the screenwriting mentorship program currently attached to the fund, and providing resources from the Minnesota film office.

All activity concerning the fund is presented to the Advisory Committee, which meets quarterly at the offices of the Minnesota Film Board. This committee is represented by board and staff members from both organizations, representatives from the McKnight Foundation, Northwest Airlines, and members of the Minnesota filmmaking community.

What is IFP/North?
Independent Feature Project/North is a nonprofit arts organization whose mission is to encourage the quality and diversity of independent media production. We accomplish this mission by fostering the personal vision of a diverse group of filmmakers, providing access to funding that allows for creative control by filmmakers, and cultivating exposure to a wide range of audiences. IFP/North is one of five chapters of the Independent Feature Project (also in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and Chicago), independently incorporated with a regional focus.

What kind of community does Minneapolis/St. Paul have? What are some recent projects that have come from the area?
The Twin Cities film community is very unique in terms of developing filmmakers who have very limited or nonexistent funds, but a wealth of contacts and hook-ups in crew and post facilities. A perfect example would be the increasing number of short films that are made locally. In 1999 approximately 30 short films were completed. Short filmmakers make up a good portion of the film community, but the range of projects is spread across the board with commercial work, television, and feature length projects like 1995 MIFF recipient Wendell Jon Andersson's *With or Without You* or filmmaker Eric Tretbar's *Snow*, both of which played the international festival circuit.

Who makes up the staff of IFP/North and MIFF?
IFP/North has a staff of five fabulous folks: executive director Jane Minton; business director Rita Pucci; film funds director Patrice Snead (that's me); public relations/events director Kelly Nathe; and membership director Chris Dotson. The MIFF team consists of myself, Georgianna Day (special projects director, Minnesota Film Board), Jane Minton (IFP/North), and Randy Adamsick (executive director, Minnesota Film Board).

The driving philosophy behind the fund is . . .
Make movies!

What percentage of the MIFF's budget goes towards film or video projects?
Each year the Minnesota Independent Film Fund distributes awards totaling $75,000 worth of development money and mentorship support to Minnesota makers of dramatic feature films.

What types of projects do you seek?
MIFF is intended for mid-career artists with some production experience; established filmmakers, if their artistic development will be significantly advanced by MIFF; and artists who demonstrate significant promise as filmmakers.

How many media awards are given out per year? What is the total dollar amount awarded annually?
The $75,000 development fund annually awards three $25,000 loans.

What is the ratio of applicants to recipients?
Approximately 12 applicants per recipient, although this average can fluctuate from year to year. Last year there were 37 applicants.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications (e.g., ethnicity, geography, medium)? Do you accept projects of all lengths and genres?
All applicants must be current Minnesota residents or former Minnesota residents having lived in the state for a period of seven consecutive years. MIFF awards feature-length fiction projects, with artistic vision and ability to complete production as the primary distinguishing criteria.

Do you fund projects at various stages of production?
The fund's mission is to support projects at all stages of development. Applicants are required to submit a feature-length script or treatment, and are strongly encouraged to provide video samples of their work.

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FUNDER FAQ


1999 winners of the MIFF (L-R): J.D. Dunlop, William Kruse, Kate Lehmann, Sara Moore

Name some of the best-known titles and/or artists you have funded. What have been some of the distribution/ exhibition paths of those projects?
There are two MIFF projects that have been completely finished, and both without distributors. The 1995 recipient, screenwriter Wendell Jon Andersson, received one of the first MIFF awards for his film *With or Without You*, produced by Karla Eckdahl. Francis Wilkinson together with Mount Curve Productions, received the MIFF award in 1998 for their film *Hollow Mack*, which has filmmaker Charles Burnett attached. In 1996, filmmaker Garret Williams completed his feature film *Spark* with the MIFF development money. *Spark* was screened at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, and also received an award and high recognition at New York's Urbanworld Film Festival last year. Wendell is currently doing some writing for MTV Productions in Los Angeles, and Garret's short film *BB Gun* was recently aired on Showtime. The opportunities for both Garret and Wendell have extended beyond Minnesota, but receiving the MIFF award was a huge stepping stone in their careers.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
The MIFF guidelines are distributed in early April; this year's deadline is July 7th. During the three-month promotion of MIFF, several informational workshops are held throughout Minnesota with an out-of-state workshop alternating each year between New York and Los Angeles. This year I will be conducting an informational workshop in New York at the offices of AIVF. (See page 69 for details.)

Can the same individual apply two years in a row? Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used?
Folks who are not fund recipients can reapply as often as they wish. However, former fund winners with successfully produced projects must have paid back the fund to re-apply. Former fund award winners who have not successfully produced the awarded project may re-apply after three years with a different project. As a condition of the award, recipients enter into a contract with the Minnesota Independent Film Fund where they are personally responsible for all development funds awarded. All funds must be repaid on the first day of principal photography or upon the sale, transfer, reversion of rights, assignment or other disposition of property.

Who makes the award decisions? Can you name some past national panelists?
All projects are presented to a local panel of industry professionals for an intensive evaluation process, which narrows the entire applicant pool to ten finalists. The 10 finalists are publicly announced at the end of August, and are then reviewed by a national panel of three industry professionals. Some of our national panelists include: Joy Newhouse (Sloss Law Firm), producer Jim Stark, Marcus Hu (Strand Releasing), Lynn Holst (Halmark Entertainment), and director/producer Tom Kalin.

Tell us a little about the review process.
Each panelist receives a set of judging criteria and all of the applicant's submitted materials to carefully evaluate each project. The local panel meets after weeks of evaluation to rank the 10 projects that will go to the second round of judging. The national panel also receives judging criteria and project materials, but during an intensive two-day gathering in Minnesota they also interview each applicant and their team (i.e. producer, writer, and director). Three MIFF recipients are chosen after all the interviews have been completed.

IFP/North provides invaluable information resources for independent filmmakers in the midwest, including fiscal sponsorship. Do you give additional support to artists once they've received the award?
You betcha (we really don't talk like that either, for the record). The media coverage of this film fund is major! In addition to the local press we send information to national outlets as well. Mentorship and support with high profile executives in New York and Los Angeles is given to each recipient as well. The prestige of this program is equivalent to Minnesota royalty in the film community.

What advice do you have for filmmakers in putting forth a strong application?
There are no stupid questions. Don't wait until the last minute to prepare for the application process, because it is high maintenance in terms of budgets, development schedules, and project description. Most importantly: do your homework. Take a moment to review the applications of former applicants for pointers. Get to know your administrator and do not assume anything.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
I really have a hard time with the word mistake, because I believe everything is on a learning curve. So I will say that many applicants learn that they should have a very polished script or treatment when they submit their project, because the script is the foundation of it all. I can't say enough about good writing. Most importantly have your production team in place, (writer, producer, and director of the project). Out of those three positions only one will take the creative lead in applying

to the fund. I will throw in another lesson that some of the finalists have learned: do not try to impress the national panel with clever marketing or name dropping because they do this work for a living and they can detect a snow job in a second.

What would people most be surprised to learn about MIFF?

The Minnesota Independent Film Fund continues to be the only feature financing program of its kind in the United States. It was actually modeled after a similar program (The Canadian Film Fund) in Canada. The biggest surprise about MIFF would be the new addition of a screenwriting mentorship provided for each of the recipients. The Jerome Foundation generously funds this portion of MIFF to help the recipients develop their scripts under the mentorship of the screenwriter of their choice. The mission behind the mentorship is to make sure the foundation of the project—the script—is strong, which is the seed of any strong project.

What distinguishes MIFF from other more traditional funders?

MIFF is not a grant but a loan, and recipients are expected to pay back the loan when they start shooting their film. However, if the MIFF recipient does not secure all the financing to shoot their film they do not have to pay back the loan.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.

I would be a fool if I did not say the McKnight Foundation—it pays most of my salary. Seriously though, I do admire programs by the Jerome Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Creative Capital, Rockefeller, basically any foundation or program that supports an artist's growth and potential deserves admiration.

If not funding media, what would you be doing?

To be honest with you I fell into the funding arena, but it has definitely made a woman out of me. My skills as a spin doctor are in full effect. Fund administrators are the folks you hate to love and love to hate, but the filmmaking community in Minnesota is so incredibly precious, there are always a few sour grapes, but you do your best to be fair and practical and that is all I can do. Further on down the road I would like to dedicate my energy to the promotion of inspiring works by filmmakers of color to targeted audiences and individuals that can give support and resources to the filmmakers with limited outlets in this industry. The whole art of visual storytelling is so awesome to experience, let alone taking credit for impacting someone's life with your work.

Famous last words:

Those who can make movies, and those who can't will tell you not to make the movie in the first place.

Michelle Coe is Program and Information Services Director at AIVF

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FESTIVALS

BY SCOTT CASTLE

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DOMESTIC

AFI LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 19-26, CA. Deadline: June 5 (early), July 17 (final). Fest combines film programming w/ special events, capturing cultural diversity of L.A. while providing new filmmakers w/ avenue of exposure to film industry. Sections incl. Official Competition, New Directions (American Indies), European Film Showcase, Latin Cinema Series, Shorts, Docs. Prizes incl. Grand Jury Prize, New Directions Prize, Best New Director, Best New Writer, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Film Editing, Audience Awards in each category. Entries must be L.A. premieres w/ no previous local TV/theatrical exposure. Fest receives wide print coverage in trades, *LA Times*, etc. & is open to public. Filmmakers not paid fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $40 features/$30 shorts (early); $50/$40 (final). Contact: AFI Fest, 2021 N. Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (323) 856-7707; fax: 462-4049; afifest@afionline.org; www.afifest.com

BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 2-12, MA. Deadline: May 30. 12th annual fest is a noncompetitive event, presenting the best contemporary films & videos from around the world that deal w/ Jewish themes. Fest is well-attended, consistently receives excellent media coverage & has frequently been recognized for excellence in programming. Fest presents narrative, doc, animated & experimental works of any length. Submissions must not have previously screened in Boston area. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). No entry fee. Contact: BJFF, 99 Moody St, Waltham, MA 02453; (617) 244-9899; fax: 244-9894; info@bjff.com; www.bjff.com

CONVERGENCE FILM/VIDEO/ANIMATION FESTIVAL, Sept. 16-24. RI. Deadline: June 1. Fest is presented as part of the Convergence Int'l Arts Festival & is seeking shorts 10 min. in length or less. Live action & animated works in all genres accepted in cats: doc, narrative, experimental. Work must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1999. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10. Contact: CFVAF, 400 Westminster St., 4th fl., Providence, RI 02903; (401) 621-1992; lynne@caparts.org; www.caparts.org

HARDACRE FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 5, IA. Deadline: June 10. Fest recognizes excellence in independent cinema. Cats incl. feature, short, doc, animation, experimental, foreign & student films. Awards: Non-cash prizes. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: $25 Contact: HFF, 417 E.4th St., Tipton, IA 52772; (319) 886-2080; fax: 886-6466; hardacres@aol.com; www.geocities.com/hardacrefilmfest/

HEARTLAND FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 18-26, IN. Deadline: June 15. Fest seeks features & shorts that "explore the human journey by artistically expressing hope & respect for the positive values of life." Cats: dramatic, children (live action & animation), doc. Awards totaling $100,000; $50,000 grand prize for dramatic feature. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (under 50 min.); $55 (50 min. & up). Contact: HFF, 613 N. East St., Indianapolis, IN 46202; (317) 464-9405; fax: 635-4201; hff@pop.iquest.net; www.heartlandfilmfest.org

INT'L DOCUMENTARY ASSOC. (IDA) DOC AWARDS COMPETITION, Oct., CA. Deadline: May 15. 16th annual competition recognizes achievement in nonfiction films & videos. Any nonfiction work completed, or having primary release or telecast between Jan. 1, 1999 & April 15, 2000 is eligible to submit for the Distinguished Documentary Achievement Awards; cats: feature, short, limited series, strand program; and additional consideration for the ABCNews VideoSource Award for Best Use of News Footage in a Documentary ($2,000 honorarium & $2,000 worth of research time at the ABCNews VideoSource facility in New York) &/or the Pare Lorentz Award ($2,500 honorarium). Winners honored at 16th Annual IDA Awards Gala in L.A. on Oct. 29 & screened at DocuFest on Oct. 29. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, Digibeta. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $55 (IDA members); $75 (nonmembers); limited series & strand program: $200 (IDA members), $300 (nonmembers); ABCNews VideoSource & Pare Lorentz Awards: add'l $25 per entry. Contact: IDA, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035; (310) 284-8422 x. 26; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net; www.documentary.org

INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, CA. Deadline: June 10. LaborFest is now calling for videos for 7th annual event held in San Francisco. Fest organized to commemorate the 1934 San Francisco General Strike through cultural arts of working people. Videos & films can incl. union struggles, political struggles of labor, locally, nat'-ly & int'ly. Works should explore the connections between labor & democracy, race, sex, environment, media, war & capitalist economy. Looking for works that challenge practically & ideologically the thinking of working people. Works will be shown throughout the month in S.F. English captions preferred. Open format incl. drama, animation & doc. Send video w/ bio & narrative summary. Formats: Betacam, VHS, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Laborfest, Box 425584, San Francisco, CA 94142; (415) 282-1908; fax: 695-1369; lvpsf@labornet.org; www.laborfest.net

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., CA. Deadline: July 1. 4th annual fest is presented by Filmmakers United, a nonprofit org. Last year nearly 100 films were screened at the Writers' Guild of America. Eligible films must have been completed after Jan 1, 1999. Cats: animation, comedy, doc, drama, experimental & music video. Awards: Gift certificate of an Award; goods & services. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (under 40 mins); $30 (40-60 mins). Contact: LA Shorts Fest, Robert Arentz, Fest Director, N. Alexandria Ave., Los Angeles CA 90029; (323) 663-0242; fax: 663-0242; info@lashortsfest.com; www.lashortsfest.com

NEW ORLEANS FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-19, LA. Deadlines: June 1; June 15 (late). 6th annual fest features premieres, classic film retrospectives, panel discussions & gala events. Cats: doc, narrative, music video, experimental & animation. Entries of all lengths welcome. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1998. Top prize of $5,000 given to Judges' Award winner. Top 10 films/videos receive an engraved lucite Lumiere Award. Films produced by Louisiana filmmakers eligible to win the LA Lumiere, LA Lagniappe & Best New Orleans Film. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, S-VHS, Beta. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fees: $35 (U.S); $45 (int'l); $55 (late). Contact: NOFVF, Cinema 16, 225 Baronne St. Ste. 1712, New Orleans, LA 70119; (504) 524-5271; neworleansfilmfest@worldnet.att.net; www.neworleansfilmfest.com.

NEW YORK EXPO OF SHORT FILM AND VIDEO Nov., NY. Deadline: June 15. 34th annual event is nation's longest-running fest of short films (under 60 min.). Fest seeks fiction, animation, doc, and experimental film & video. Films/videos should be completed since 1998. Student & int'l entries welcome. All films selected to be shown by teams of top professionals in the NY film community are considered Jury Award Winners. Films are futher awarded Gold, Silver, Bronze & Best Debut in their respective cats of animation, fiction, experimental & doc. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", digital, Beta SP (NTSC only). 35mm & super 8 films shown in video projection. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fee: $40; +$5 for preview return. Contact: NY Expo, Fest Director, Anne Borin, 163 Amsterdam Ave., pmb 107, New York, NY 10023; (212) 505-7742; fax: 586-6367; nyexpo@aol.com; www.yrd.com/nyexpo

NORTHAMPTON FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 1-5, MA. Deadline: June 30. 6th annual fest showcases independent film & video from throughout the U.S., from shorts to features; narrative, doc, experimental, animation. Competitive, juried event encourages features. Approx. 50-60 works screened. Awards incl. Best of the Fest, Most Creative Cinematography, Best First Feature, Best Screenplay, Best Doc, Best Short. Fest incl. a Filmmaking Forum, featuring presentations by selected industry leaders, post-screening Q&As w/ artists, workshops, seminars, tributes, special guests & programs, artists' reception & parties. All events are within walking distance of each other. All works must have been completed after 1998. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DVD, VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (less than 30 min.); $30 (30 min. to less than 60 min.); $35 (60 min. or more). Entry form & info. avail. on web site or send SASE. Contact: NFF, Northampton Film Assocs., Inc., 351 Pleasant St., #213, Northampton, MA 01060; (413) 586-3471; fax: 584-4432; filmfest@nohofilm.org; www.nohofilm.org

PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, July 27-Aug. 2, CA. Deadline: June 1. 6th annual competitive fest is one of the world's largest presenter of short films, screening 250 films from 30 countries last year. Fest accepts works no longer than 40 min. & completed in '99 or 2000. Cats incl. animation, live action, doc, best of the fest & additional cats for student and works under 15 min. Awards: Cash prizes of $1,000 (1st) & $500 (2nd) in each cat. 1st place winner becomes eligible for Academy Award consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee for students; $25 (all others). Contact: PSIFF, 1700 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way., Ste. 3, Palm Springs, CA 92262; (760) 322-2930; fax: 322-4087; filmfest@psfilmfest.org; www.psfilmfest.org

REELING 2000: CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 3-16, IL. Deadline: July 1. 20th annual fest seeks wide variety of lesbian, gay, bi & transgendered films & videos for 2nd oldest fest of its kind in the world. All genres & lengths accepted. Cash prizes awarded in cats: doc, experimental/animation, narrative short, narrative feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 (for first entry); $10 (each additional). Contact: Reeling 2000, Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark, Chicago, 60640; (773) 293-1447; fax: 293-0575; reeling@chicagofilmmakers.org; www.chicagofilmmakers.org

RESFEST DIGITAL FILM FESTIVAL, CA, NY. Deadlines: May 1 (early); June 5 (final). 4th annual nat'l/int'l touring fest seeks short films/videos shot in any format but finished digitally & output to tape & digital feature films output to video or 35mm. Fest tour incl. stops in L.A., San Fran & NYC. Fest's mission is to expose & inspire audiences across the country & the world w/ new films, by new filmmakers, made w/ new technology. A dynamic line-up of film screenings, in-depth panel discussions, technology presentations & parties. Cats: doc, experimental, feature, animation. Awards: Audience Choice Award w/ cash prizes. Formats: Beta SP (preferred), 35mm, Mini DV (NTSC). Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL/ SECAM), Beta SP (NTSC), Mini DV (NTSC). Tapes returned w/ SASE. Entry fees: $15 (early) $20 (final). Contact: Resfest, 109 Minna St., Ste. 390, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 437-2686; fax: 437-2687; resfest@resfest.com; www.resfest.com

SEATTLE LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-26, WA. Deadline: June 15 (early); July 15 (final). Presented by Seattle's Three Dollar Bill Cinema, fest invites submissions of films & videos of every genre. TDB Cinema was founded in 1995 & is staffed year-round by volunteers who produce fest. Cats: feature, short, fiction, doc, experimental. Awards: Best Lesbian Feature, Best Short Film, Three Dollar Bill Award for Excellence ($3,000 total). Once film is submitted, it may not be withdrawn. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10 (early); $15 (final). Incl. SASE for return. All submissions must incl. entry form. Contact: SLGFF, Three Dollar Bill Cinema, 1122 E. Pike St. #1313, Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 323-4274; fax: 323-4275; filmfest@drizzle.com; www.seattlequeerfilm.com

SEATTLE UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-13, WA. Deadline: June 1. Fest is "dedicated to bringing you the very best of avant-garde, experimental & offbeat short & feature films from around the world." Last year's fest screened over 80 films to an audience of over 2,000. All lengths, topics & languages acceptable. Cats: experimental/avant-garde, narrative, doc, comedy, animation. Awards: Best Short Film, Best Feature Film, Best Experimental Film, Best Video. Entry forms avail. on web site. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, all NTSC video. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Contact: SUFF, Cinema 18, 1412 18th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122; acmecinema@aol.com; www.seattleunderground.com

SUPER 8 SIDESHOW, Aug. 18-19, CO. Deadline: June 30. Fest for short films (20 min. or less) shot predominantly on super 8. All categories encouraged. Awards incl. cash prizes, film stock, video rentals & beer. Formats: super 8, VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $8. Contact: S8S, c/o Johnny at the Brainbox, 1522 Lafayette St. #3, Denver, CO 80218; (303) 863-9235; tivie6@yahoo.com

TELLURIDE INDIEFEST 2K, Dec. 7-10, CO. Deadline Aug. 1; (Only first 1000 entries will be accepted. Last year entries were accepted until early July). Often referred to as "Film Camp" because of its friendly & intimate atmosphere, this non-competitive fest shows the best of independent cinema, short films & docs from around the world & showcases outstanding screenwriting achievements. All genres accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $50 (feature films/videos, screenplays), $45 (30-60 min. or pgs.), $40 (under 30 min. or pgs.); later entries (July 1-Aug. 1) add $10. Contact: Michael Carr, director, Box 860, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 728-3747; fax: 728-8128, festival@telluridеindiefest.com; www. telluridеindiefest.com

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 19-22, CA. Deadline: June 30. Non-competitive fest, held at Stanford Univ., showcases doc films & videos dealing w/ UN-related issues; human rights, environmental survival, famine, war & peace, etc. All genres & lengths eligible. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4" (PAL/NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25. Contact: UNAFF, Fest. Director Jasmina Bojic, Dept. of Slavic Lang & Lit, Stanford Univ., Stanford, CA 94305; (650) 725-0012; fax: 725-0011; info@unaff.org; www.unaff.org

WINFEMME, Aug. 8-11, CA. Deadline: June 15. 2nd annual fest was created to increase the number of female protagonists. Fest will be held a various film studios & screening rooms and is seeking features, docs, shorts & screenplays that are L.A. premieres & feature female protagonists. Numerous seminars will be held featuring entertainment executives. Shorts should be under 30 min., docs should be less than 100 min., screenplays should be under 100 pgs. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 1/2", 3/4". Preview on VHS; tapes will not be returned. Entry fee: $50. Contact: WF, Box 69-1774, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (310) 996-0267; winfemme@aol.com; www.ekage.com/winfemme.html

WORLD POPULATION FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept., MA. Deadline: June 15. Secondary & college students eligible to submit works that address population growth, resource consumption, environment & common global future. Cats: drama, animation, experimental, short, image/montage; docs of any length accepted in film, video & multimedia. Awards: total of $10,000 in prizes awarded to best entries in secondary & college cats. "Best of Fest" VHS tapes made avail. to secondary schools & colleges & may be broadcast on MTV, Turner & PBS. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 3/4", 1/2", mul-

QUEER AS A THREE DOLLAR CINEMA

The impetus for one of Seattle's newest festivals was the lack of opportunity for the city's residents to see gay-themed films. Founding director Skylar Fein changed all that by creating the **Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival**. Current fest co-directors Kirsten Shaffer and Justine Barda carry on the tradition as the popular annual event enters its fifth year. "We hear from our audience all the time that they want to see more than just coming-out stories," says Barda. "Films that do justice to the complexity of gay peoples' lives are going to be about more than their sexuality." The festival explores how gay lifestyles translate to celluloid with panel discussions that add depth to the regular program of features, docs, shorts, and script readings. Last year's fest featured 35 programs of work and doled out cash awards totaling $3,000 to four winning filmmakers. "We are committed to an ongoing conversation about film—namely queer film," concludes Barda, "This festival is a community event and a cultural event and it's exciting to make that happen." See listing.



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YOUNG PEOPLE'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, OR. Deadline: May 8. Founded in 1975, this is an annual juried survey of outstanding work by grade & high school students from the Northwest (OR, WA, ID, MT, UT, AK). A jury reviews entries & assembles a program for public presentation. Judges' Certificates awarded. About 20 films & videos are selected each year. Entries must have been made w/in previous 2 yrs. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Hi-8, computer disk. No entry fee. Contact: YPFVF, Kristin Konsterlie, Fest Coordinator, NW Film Center, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; info@nwfilm.org; www.nwfilm.org

Foreign

ATLANTIC FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 15-23, Canada. Deadline: June 9. 20th annual competitive fest, located in coastal Halifax, is a nine-day celebration of film known for its warm & festive atmosphere. Sections incl. Atlantic Focus, Canadian Perspectives, Int'l Perspectives, The Late Shift, Frame by Frame (animation) & Special Programs. Awards: cash prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (0-60 min.); $50 (60 min. & over). Contact: AFF, Box 36139, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 3S9; (902) 422-3456; fax: 422-4006; festival@atlanticfilm.com; www.atlanticfilm.com

BRITISH SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 16-23, England. Deadline: June 1. BBC-sponsored fest takes place at the UCI Empire in London's Leicester Sq. During the course of a week filmmakers are given the opportunity to screen their films at a prestigious cinema in the heart of London. Fest also enables filmmakers to network w/ like-minded people & industry pros. Short films of all genres are accepted (40 min. or under). Fest is competitive (this year's cats incl. Best American Short Film, Best Int'l Film, Best British Production, Best Cinematography, Audience Award) and awards will be given. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP (PAL). Preview on VHS (PAL). No entry fee. Contact: BSFF, Lisa Murray, Fest Coordinator, B202 Centre House, 56 Wood Lane, London, W12 7SB, England; 011 44 20 8743 8000 x. 62222; fax: 44 20 8740-8540;lisa.murray.02@bbc.co.uk

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 2-Oct. 7, Canada. Deadline: June 15. Open to professional & non-professional productions, competitive fest, founded in 1969, holds showings in several cities in Canada after main fest in Campbell River, BC. Entrants incl. amateur filmmakers, ind. filmmakers & preprofessional students of film. About 30 prods showcased. Cats: short, feature, student, doc, experimental, animation, comedy, science. Awards incl. Best Overall Entry, Scenario, Doc, Natural Sciences, Animation, Experimental, Editing, Humor, Teen 16-19, Teen under 16. Max running time for entries: 30 min., except for features. Entries must have been completed in previous 5 yrs. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20-$100. Contact: CIAFF, 25 Eugenia St., Barrie, Ontario Canada L4M-1P6; ph/fax: (705) 733-8232; ciaff@canada.com; www.CIAFF.org

EURO UNDERGROUND, Oct. 14-Nov. 22. Euro Tour: Krakow, Poland; Sofia, Bulgaria & Kiev, Ukraine. Int'l Tour: South America, Southeast Asia, U.S. Deadline: July 19. 4th annual touring fest is produced by The Int'l Film & Performance Society, a crosscultural art organization exhibiting works in Europe & throughout the world. EU & IFPS offer filmmakers a global exhibition network. Prizes incl. post-fest exhibition in Europe, Southeast Asia, South America and America. Fest seeks underground, independent and experimental film & video for their fall 2000 european festivals as well as for continues global exhibition network. Cats incl. feature, short, doc, animation, experimental, installation, performance video & digital work. Formats 35mm, 16mm, super 8, all video formats & Pixel. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30 (short work & features). Entry form avail. on web site. Contact: EU/IFPS, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. Ste. 142, Chicago IL, 60647; (888) 864-9644; (312) 401-7178; fax: (773) 292-9205; info@eurounderground.org; www.eurounderground.org

GIFFONI FILM FESTIVAL, July 15-22, Italy. Deadline: June 10. 30th annual fest shows "film & short films of high artistic & technical value linked to the problems of the pre-adolescent world." Four competitions are held w/ one non-competitive cat. Awards: Gold, Silver & Bronze Gryphon. Formats: 35mm, VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Entry form avail. on web site. Contact: GFF, Piazza Umberto I, 84095, Giffoni Valle Piana, Salerno, Italy; 011 390 89 868 544; fax: 390 89 866 111; giffonif@giffoniff.it; www.giffoniff.it

LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 2-12, Switzerland. Deadline: June 15. In 53rd yr, this major Swiss cultural/cinematic all-feature event w/ reputation for innovative programming & support of alternative visions from ind. directors & recently founded nat'l film industries. Unique section is series of open-air screenings in Locarno's Piazza Grande, which holds 8,000. Program, in addition to competition & Piazza Grande screenings, incl. filmmaker of the present, retro section, sidebar sections, new Swiss cinema & film market. Competition is reserved for fiction features representative of "Young Cinema" (irst or second features) and "New Cinema" (films by more established filmmakers who are innovating in film style and content, and works by directors in emerging film industries). The section Leopards of Tomorrow is devoted to short films & works from film schools. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Films which have won prizes at other int'l fests recognized by the FIAPF ineligible for competition & preferences for all sections given to world or European premieres. Educational, advertising & scientific films ineligible. Awards: Golden Leopard together w/ Grand Prix of the City of Locarno (SFr 40,000; approx. $24,000) to best film in competition; Second Prize (Silver Leopard) for a film in the "New Cinema competiton" (SFr. 20,000; approx. $12,150) and Third Prize (Silver Leopard) for a film in the "Young Competition" (SFr. 20,000); Special Prizes (Bronze Leopards), to actor and actress of exceptional merit in film in competition; Crossair Special Jury Award (SFr 10,000; approx. $6,075). 2 reps of each competition film will be fest guests for 5 days. Over 250 prods shown each yr. Covered by 800 journalists from 31 countries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, videos for "Filmmaker of the Present." Preview on VHS. Contact: LIFF (Fest Internazionale del Film di Locarno), Marco Müller, director, Via Luini 3a, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; 011 41 91 756 2121; fax: 41 91 756 2149; info@pardo.ch; www.pardo.ch

MIFED, Oct. 29-Nov. 2, Italy. Deadline: June 23. Milan hosts this fest, one of the biggest int'l markets for TV and film. Now in its 67th ed. Over 80 countries. 2/3 of participants are prods. and distrs. 27 film theaters, all with Dolby. 9,000 sq. ft. exhib. & booth space. Facilities incl. commercial office

space. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: varies. After June 23 office space is subj. to availability. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Contact: MIFED, Elena Lloyd, Production Manager, Lgo. Domodossola, 1/20145 Milano, Italy; 011 3 92 48 01 29 12; fax: 3 92 49 97 70 20; mifed@fmd.it; www.fmd.it/mifed/

OVNI 2000: MOSTRA DE VIDEO INDEPENDENT, June 27-July 2, Spain. Deadline: March 6. Curated by videomakers, fest takes place every 18 months, showing nat'l & int'l video works & gradually incorporating new technologies. Fest does not select works purely on basis of their advanced formats, since theme of each fest is based on work received. Upcoming 6th edition will have the usual program of video screenings, open video, interactive works & digital formats (Only CD Rom PC-AC). Cats: Any style or genre. No awards: fest pays 90 EUR (approx. $90) as exhibition right for work selected. Formats: Beta SP, Digital, 3/4", 1/2", U-matic. Preview on VHS (tapes will not be returned). No entry fee. Contact: OVNI 2000, Joan Leandre, Toni Serra, Nuria Canal, Rosa Llop Mantalegre, 5, 08001 Barcelona, Spain; 011 34 3 306 41 00; fax: 34 3 306 41 13; ovni@cccb.org; www.cccb.org/ovni

OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, Sept. 29-Oct. 4, Canada. Deadline: July 1. Competitive biennial fest for film & video, founded in 1976, is N. America's largest & oldest animation fest. Fest features noncompetitive Int'l Panorama, retros, tributes, children's program, numerous workshops & social events in addition to competition. Entries must have been completed since June 30 of preceding 2 yrs. Craft entry cats incl. animation, design, story, music &/or sound, animation, media, object, computer drawn, mixed media, exp. or unusual technique. Competition for independent & commissioned work. Entrants should specify one of following cats: prods under 50, first films (student films welcome), films for children, graduate student films, educational prods., promotional works (commercials, PSAs), music videos, TV specials, TV series, animation for Internet, studio showreels. Fest shows about 115 new works as well as another 400 in retros. Awards: Grand Prize of Fest for Best Indie & Best Commissioned Film, 2nd & 3rd prizes, Cat Prizes, Special Jury Prize. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: OIAF, Canadian Film Inst., 2 Daly Ave., Ste. 120, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6E2; (613) 232-8769; fax: 232-6315; oiaf@ottawa.com; www.awn.com/ottawa

VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 30-Sept. 9, Italy. Deadline: June 30. Fest is one of the most prestigious in the world w/ several int'l sections, each w/ their own regulations. Italian premieres only. Accepted works must be subtitled into Italian for presentation; two prints req. Sections incl. Cinema of the Present, Dreams & Visions, New Territories (experimental), Corto-Cortissimo (short, non-animated films, max. 30 min.). Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, TV, retro, experimental. Awards incl. Golden Lion for Best Film, Special Prize for Best Director, Best Script, Best Actor, Best Actress, "Marcello Mastroianni" Award for Best Young Actor or Actress, Golden Medal of the Italian Senate. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, (experimental film sections also accepts BVU & Betacam video). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: VIFF (Mostra Internazionale D'arte Cinematografica), La Biennale di Venezia Dept. of Cinema, Ca'Giustinian-San Marco, 30124 Venice, Italy 30124; 011 390 41 521 8711; fax: 390 41 522 7539; das@labiennale.com; www.labiennale.com

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COMPETITIONS

ARIZONA FILM COMMISSION'S "FILM IN ARIZONA" SCREENWRITING COMPETITION to promote screenplays set in Arizona to Hollywood creative community. Nat'l competition for original feature-length screenplays (90 min., 130 pages max.). 85% of screenplay's locations must be authentic Arizona. Industry standard format req'd. Entered screenplays may not have been previously optioned, sold or produced. Other rules apply—check web site. Awards: $1,000 Cox Communications award, industry meetings, professional script notes & other donated prizes. Entry fee: $15. Deadline: June 5. Gina Gennaro, Special Projects Coordinator, "Film In Arizona" Screenwriting Competition, 3800 N. Central Ave., Bldg. D, Phoenix, AZ 85012; (602) 280-1380; fax: 280-1384; film@azcommerce.com; www.azcommerce.com

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL HEART OF FILM SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Call for entries. Three cats: feature length adult/mature themes, feature length children/family, feature length comedy. Awards: cash prizes, air fare (up to $500), hotel accomm. (up to $500), VIP pass to Heart of Film Screenwriters Conference (Oct. 12-19), Heart of Film Bronzed Award. Entry fee: $40. Deadline: May 15. For more info: (800) 310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

BIGSTAR.COM: call for submissions from independent filmmakers for NY-based BigStar Broadband Film Festival, seeking to showcase the best features, shorts & anim. Fest will run all year on BigStar starting later this spring. As a particpant in fest, visitors to BigStar will be able to view your film—in its full length—streamed over their Internet connection using BigStar's Broadband Theater player. Films viewable in their entirety 24/7. No entry fee. To submit a title, contact: independentfilms@bigstar.com

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Est. to give you experience, feedback, direction etc. as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer, or development company sit up & take notice. You may enter one-page synopsis of screenplay you've already written, or a screenplay you intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, valued at $299, plus a free Script Detail of screenplay of your choice valued at $150, both compliments of LA's The Source World Wide Scriptservice. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entry-form.html

KAY SNOW WRITING AWARDS: Est. to encourage & support beginning & emerging writers. Non-published, non-produced short or partial scripts. Submissions must be original & unpublished. Script must be 10 pages max. from any portion of a script, or a short script under 10 pages in its entirety. Finalists will be notified by mail in August. Entry fee: $10, (waived for students through grade 12). Awards: $300 first place, $150 second place, $50 third place. Student prizes: $50 for first place in each age division. Deadline: May 15. Kay Snow Writing Awards, Willamette Writers, 9045 SW Barbur Blvd, Ste. 5A, Portland, OR 97219; (503) 452-1592; wilwrite@willamettewriters.com; www.willamettewriters.com

MAINE STUDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL: 23rd annual event open to Maine residents aged 19 or younger. Cats: Pre-Teen: K-6; Junior: 7-9; Senior: 10-12. No entry fee. Winners & finalists receive certificate of merit & prizes such as movie tickets & videotapes. Grand Prize Winner, selected from Senior division, receives scholarship worth $1,400 for 2-week "Young Filmmakers" program at Int'l Film & Television Workshops in Rockport, ME in summer of 2000. Works selected on basis of originality, content, style, & technique. Pick up entry forms at your local school. Deadline: June 1. Fest's public screening held July 8 as part of Maine Int'l Film Festival.

MAUI WRITERS CONFERENCE SCREENWRITING COMPETITION highlights quality screenplays that may not otherwise get discovered. All judges are Hollywood pros from top studios, production companies, agencies, networks & management companies. Contest open to any feature film screenplay that hasn't yet been optioned, sold, or produced. Awards: $2,500 first place, $1,000 second place, $500 third place. Plus, each prize also comes w/ fully paid admission to 2001 Maui Writers Conference. Entry fee: $50. Deadline: June 1. mauiscript@aol.com; www.mauiwriters.com

NATIONAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: All scripts entered evaluated based upon concept, structure, character, cinematic quality & superior writing. In initial round, each script will be read & rated by one reader. Scripts that qualify based upon above criteria will be read by entire panel. All winning entries considered for possible production or development as feature films. Entry fee: $45. Awards: $2,500 first place, $500 second place, $250 third place. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Seamus O'Fionnghusa, Director, Nat'l Screenwriting Competition, 755 Highway 34, Matawan, NJ 07747; (732) 583-2138; fax: 566-7336; director@skyweb.net; www.nationalscreenwriting.com

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature-length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ $40 entry fee payable to NTV, 21 Central Pk. W., Ste. 1T, NY, NY 10023.

OHIO INDEPENDENT SCREENPLAY AWARDS: Call for entries for Best Screenplay Award & Best Northcoast Screenplay Awards. All genres accepted. Prizes incl. $1,000, screenplay reading at Ohio Ind. Film Festival in Nov., submission to L.A. literary agent, screenwriting software & industry script analysis. Early entry fee (postmarked May 15): $40 per screenplay; late entry fee (postmarked by June 1): $60 per screenplay. Contact: OIFF, 1121 Clark Ave., Cleveland, OH 44109; (216) 781-1755; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com; www.ohiofilms.com

RHODE ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL SCREENPLAY COMPETITION To recognize creativity, innovation & the art of storytelling. Scripts must not have been sold or optioned prior to entry. Awards: Grand: $2,000 plus round-trip air & lodging to RIIFF 2000; staged reading of work. Deadline: May 15. Entry fee: $30. George T. Marshall, Exec. Director, Rhode Island Int'l Film Festival, Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 861-4445; fax: 847-7590; flicksart@aol.com; www.film-festival.org

SCRIPTAPALOOZA TV SEMI-ANNUAL COMPETITION: Scriptapalooza TV (SPTV) has been created to open a new door for the aspiring writer. SPTV's goal is to expand competition arena to include a wider spectrum of writing opportunities. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: May 15. Mark Andrushko, President, TV Semi-Annual Competition, 7775 Sunset Blvd., PMB #200, L.A., CA 90046; (323) 654-5809; fax: 656-7260; info@scriptapalooza.com; www.scriptapalooza.com

SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: To support new filmmakers on an ongoing basis. Screenplays must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced (see entry form for other rules). Top three awards of $2,000, $1,000, $500. Also software plus submission to major literary agency & major studio. Entry fee: $50; late: $60. Deadline: May 17; late: July 12. Allen Glazier, Screenplay Competition Director, Slamdance Screenplay Competition, Slamdance Screenplay Competition, 6381 Hollywood Boulevard, #520, L.A., CA 90028; (323) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; AGlazier@Slamdance.com; www.slamdance.com

TEXAS FILM INSTITUTE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: To promote, develop & seek production of new talented screenwriters w/in studios & independent film market. Awards: Cash, producers one-on-one, relevant screenwriting tools. Entry fee: $75 w/ notes; $50 w/out notes. Deadline: June 1. Jeff Pettigrew, Creative Assistant, TFI 2000, The Ranch of Dos Cerros, 409 Mountain Spring, Boerne, TX 78006; (830) 537-5906; fax: 537-5906; 99TFI@texasfilminstitute.com; www.texasfilminstitute.com

UNIQUE TV COMPETITION: To discover fresh writing talent for television & cable. Email or mail SASE for complete rules & entry form. Spec scripts in any genre for 30 min., 60 min. or 2 hr pilots. Awards: Winners in 2 divisions, each receives $500. Entry fee: $45. Deadline: June 1. Unique TV Competition, Box 22367, Eagan, MN 55122; info@uniquetelevision.com; www.uniquetelevision.com

VIDEO CONTEST FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS 13 th annual contest sponsored by The Christophers. Theme: "One Person Can Make a Difference." Deadline: June 16. Cash prizes totaling $6,000 awarded. For entry forms: (212) 759-4050; tci@idt.net; www.christophers.org/vidcon2k.html

WALT DISNEY STUDIOS/ABC WRITERS FELLOWSHIP: To seek out & employ culturally & ethnically diverse new writers. Submit writing sample, writing or work history resume, application form & notarized standard letter agreement. Scripts not returned. Awards: Up to six fellowships. $33,000 salary, plus a year of working as a member of the Disney staff of writers. Deadline: May 21. Troy Nethercott, Program Director, Walt Disney Studios/ABC Writers Fellowship, Fellowship

Program Director, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521; (818) 560-6894; http://members.tripod.com/~disfel/

Films & Tapes wanted

2000 GAIT FESTIVAL designed to allow independent TV producers post info about & streaming video clips of their pilots for programming buyers, agents, managers & advertisers. Users of the site able to search different criteria, conduct queries, view results & order full copy of pilot production directly from producer. Will exhibit independently produced pilots in drama, comedy, reality based programming, anim., children's programming & news/doc at Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, L.A., Sept. 5-8. Submission fee: $100. Deadline: May 15. www.tv-pilot.com

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for 2000 video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resumé, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

ATOMFILMS; an innovative, short film distribution & marketing company seeks high-quality live action, anim. & digital short films for broadcast & cable television, home video, DVD, internet, hospitality, theatrical & educational markets. We are looking for films in any genre w/ length of 30 min. or less. Films must have all clearance & rights for commercial distrib. to be considered. Send submissions on VHS (NTSC/PAL/SECAM) to AtomFilms, Attn: Acquisitions, 815 Western Avenue, Ste. 300, Seattle, WA 98104; (206) 264-2735; info@atomfilms.com; www.atomfilms.com. Tapes not returned.

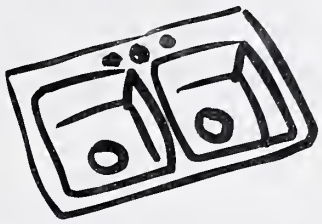
AXLEGREASE, Buffalo, NY cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi-8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@pce.net

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for indep. shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions are welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital submissions of 30 min. or less on an on-going basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Artists paid honorarium & will qualify for non-exclusive distribution deal, which will incl. license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short exper., narrative, alternative, humorous, dramatic, anim., underground works. Works selected will, in most cases, continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings & may qualify for Blackchair's DVD/VHS home video compilations as well as netcasting via microcinema.com web site. Submit VHS/or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone no. along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Blackchair Prods., 2318 Second Ave., PMP #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com. Unable to return submissions.

CIN(E) POETRY FESTIVAL accepting short poetry or literary films, videos, docs & multimedia pieces for catalog & upcoming poetry video film festival. Request entry form: Cin(E)

Small classes & tutorials
IN DIGITAL
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Interdisciplinary Certificate Program
CULTIVATING TALENT
Harvestworks Digital Media Arts
[212] 431-1130
596 Broadway Suite 602 inSoHo
harvestw@dti.net/www.harvestworks.org
HARVESTWORKS
Digital Media Arts Center


Everything included.
Avid Media Composer Off-line at rates the artist can afford.
kitchen SYNC
225 Lafayette, suite 1113, Soho
Tel: (516) 810-7238 • Fax (516) 421-6923

2000 Call for Entries

LONG ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL
18th Annual Film/Video Festival
Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center
May 18th-21st, 2000
Call or Write for Entry Forms (Due 4/1/00)
Christopher Cooke, Director
Long Island Film Festival
c/o P.O. Box 13243
Hauppauge, NY 11788
1-800-762-4769 • (516) 853-4800
From 10:00am-6pm, Mon-Fri
or visit our website at www.lifilm.org

Poetry, 934 Brannan St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; ph/fax: (415) 552-9261; poetry@nationalpoetry.org

D.FILM Digital Film Festival [www.dfilm.com] is a traveling & online showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. Look for it in your city & visit web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game.

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 99/00 SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan Univ., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FILMFILM.COM: the Internet's complete movie studio [www.filmfilm.com] seeks submissions on on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: info@filmfilm.com

FILM STUDENTS—CALL FOR ENTRIES: Angelus Awards Student Film Festival accepting submissions through July 1. Cash prizes, gifts, Directors Guild screenings. Contact: (800) 874-9999; www.angelus.org

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts, feature works-in-progress & web films seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FREE VIDEO RECORDING: Open call to independent artists for Promote Art Works, Inc.'s Spontaneous Combustion series, which airs monthly on Brooklyn Community Access Television. All fields entertained: dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater. No works in progress accepted. Quality videotapes will also be accepted for editing. Call Kathleen at (718) 797-3116.

IFC2000: nat'l student film competition presented by IFP & IFC grants prizes to student films w/ $10,000 grand prize awarded to best film from any cat. Grand prize also receives matching product grant from Kodak. Open to students currently enrolled in film degree program at accredited graduate or undergraduate American school. Eligible: 16mm, 35mm films & videos under 30 min., produced since May '99. Finalists & winners will be screened at 22nd Ind. Feature Film Market, in Sept. Winning films also screened in Los Angeles & on the Ind. Film Channel. Deadline: May 12. For applic., contact: IFP, 104 W. 29th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 465-8200 x. 108; fax: 465-8525; marketinfo@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218.

MOVIES BY MOONLIGHT 1st Annual Outdoor Fim Program will take place in Queens, NY in June 2000. Seeking films/videos 15 min. or less. Deadline: May 15. No entry fee. Send VHS tape, info sheet (& SASE for return) to: Rockaway Artists' Alliance, 260 Beach 116th St., Rockaway Park, NY 11694.

NETBROADCASTER.COM seeks films & videos for streaming on the Net. Expose your feature or short to int'l audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, comedy, anim., docs, exper., music videos, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all! Netbroadcaster.com launched last fall. Site hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of largest ISPs on the Net: films@alchemy.net

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature, plus brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PIONEERING INTERNET NETWORK w/ 24-hr on-demand access seeks art history-related films/videos (English only) of all lengths for non-exclusive Internet-only broadcast rights. Content will be broadcast in high speed streaming audio/video format on its new art history channel. No pay, just satisfaction & prestige of having your work seen around the world. Preferred AVI or quick time file on CD, DVD, or Jaz. Will also accept VHS, Beta, DV, DVcam (NTSC preferred).

POTHOLE PICTURES, a revitalized 450 seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series—a showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length/genre. Connection to New England whether thru subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers helpful but not necessary. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com

P.O.V., PBS's award-winning showcase of independent, non-fiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of indep. nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31; (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET TV: wants your home TV shows & movies. 5-30+ min. If you have one show great; if you can do it weekly, even better! Aiming for more of an adult viewing crowd—basically anything goes as long as it's legal. Open your mind & see what falls out. Also Flash anim./movies/cartoons/3D rendered short films. pbtv2@yahoo.com; http://members.xoom.com/pbtv2/

PUT MONEY IN YOUR SHORTS: Centerseat.com Film Festival now licensing short films for broadcast on its entertainment & info megasite. No cost to you. Earn royalties instead. To submit for premiere season, go to: www.centerseat.com/indie/submit

SHORT TV is the only cable network entirely dedicated to short films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in NYC, L.A., San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. To submit your film visit www.shorttv.com. For more info, call: (212) 226-6258.

SONO ARTS CELEBRATION 2000, annual summer arts festival in Norwalk, CT, looking for short video/film for outdoor screening. Early August. Humor, anim., etc. Send VHS: Film Coordinator, Sono Arts, Box 600, Norwalk, CT 06856; Lisa (203) 866-7916; www.sonoarts.org

TAG-TV.COM is accepting short films, videos & anim. to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for Internet; films that challenge assumptions of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.TheBitScreen.com

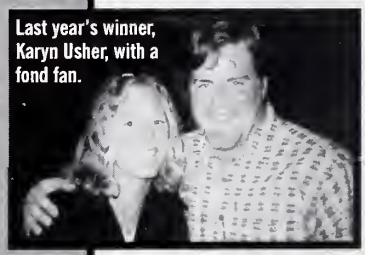
THE SHORT LIST; showcase for American & int'l short films, airs nat'ly on PBS stations. Pays $100/min. All genres, 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced in association w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards five Kodak product grants annually to selected filmmakers on the series. Submit on VHS. For appl., send SASE to: Jack Ofield, Director, The Production Center, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; www.theshortlist.com; ShortList@mail.sdsu.edu

UNDERGROUNDFILM.COM, online film community & entertainment destination, celebrates moving image & indie spirit of Internet. Web site is well-trafficked online exhibition space & offers filmmakers ability to show & sell work via their own Internet "storefront." Currently seeking film & screenplay submissions. QuickTime player required. For info: (212) 206-1995; adrien@undergroundfilm.com; www.undergroundfilm. com

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short anim., exper., or doc videos for on-going screening series. No narrative or works made on film. Currently searching for int'l videos for upcoming series in spring. Send non-returnable VHS tape w/ brief bio & $1 to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, NY, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?

What screenwriter wouldn't want to see a reading of his or her screenplay be the highlight of a film festival? The Ohio Independent Film Festival's Independent Screenplay Awards—the Script Mill Award—features a live reading of the winning script. Winners of either the Best Screenplay Award or the Best Northcoast Screenplay Award (majority of story must be set in Cleveland) vie for the top honor while also receiving submission & promotion to Hollywood producers, literary agents, talent, production companies, professional crew & talent mangaement companies. See listing



Last year's winner, Karyn Usher, with a fond fan.

PUBLICATIONS

7th INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE (IFFCON 2000) transcripts avail. IFFCON is North America's premier financing event for independent film. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers incl. "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Financing w/ Int'l TV." Send $46 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & U.S. Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, LAVA, 124 Washington Pl., NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

Resources • Funds

8x10GLOSSY.COM: Online artists' co-op offers free listing for all actors, technicians & organizations in directory & searchable database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of bulletin board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER offers $3,000 in services for media artist grant. Two $1,500 grants of production services will go to established ind. video/film or multimedia artist, or to an emerging artist. Media Artist Grant supports by giving opportunities to individuals making films & videos throughout WA state. MAG can be used toward either 911 Media Arts workshops, 911's digital video camera & light kit, or any of their 5 editing suites. 911's suites incl. a multimedia workstation (Power Mac 9500 w/ Targa RTX compression card); nonlinear Avid MCXpress (off-line); nonlinear Avid Media Composer 8000 (on-line); & multi-format analog video editing suite. Facilities accommodate editing in the following formats: Betacam SP, DVCam, DVC Pro, DV, Hi-8, 3/4" SP, S-VHS, & VHS. Deadline: June 30. To apply contact Tim Coulter, Media Services Director (206) 682-6552; tim@911media.org; or send SASE to 911 Media Arts Center, Media Artist Grant, 117 Yale Ave N., Seattle, WA 98109.

ARTS LINK U.S./JAPAN CREATIVE ARTISTS PROGRAM provides six-month residencies in Japan for individual creative artists in any discipline. Artists work on individual project which may incl. new work or pursuit of individual artistic goals. Fellows should also consider how Japan's cultures can influence their creative work. Applications must be postmarked by June 26. Contact: Arts Link, CEC Int'l Partners, 12 W. 31st St., NY, NY 10001; artslink@cecip.org

ASTRAEA provides grants up to $10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Deadline: Nov. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321.

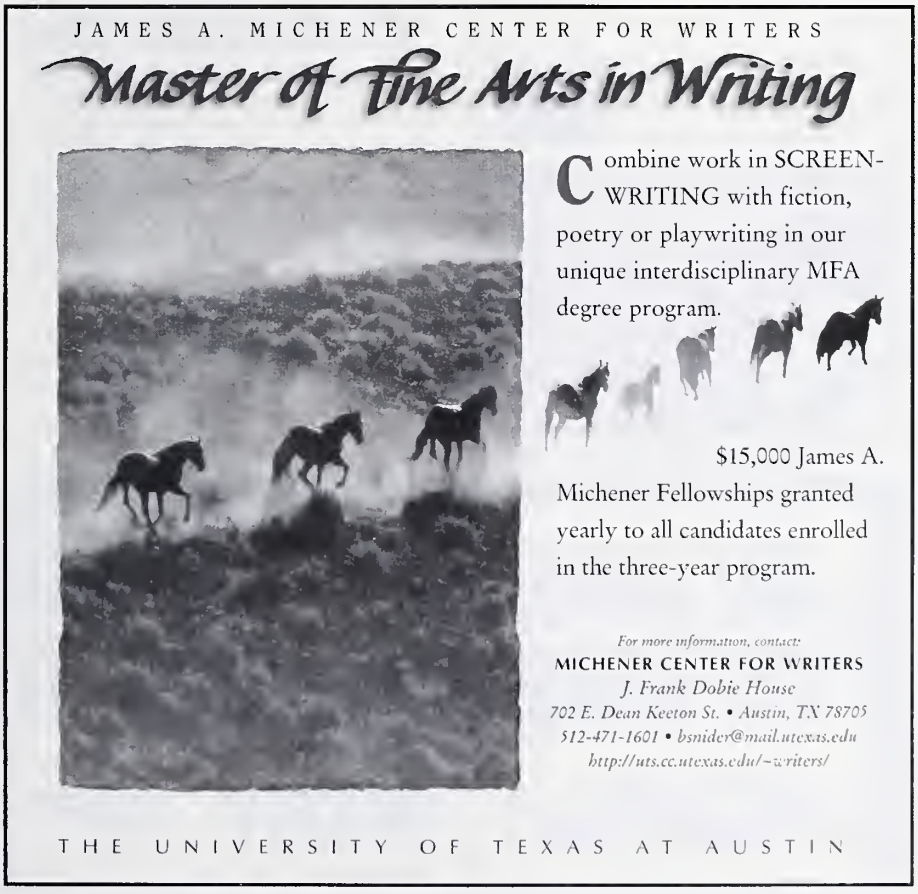
BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute: (213) 856-7690.

CA CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & to pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps, travel & similar activities necessary to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ CA Council for Humanities staff. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste. 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA: (213) 623-5993; in San Diego: (619) 232-4020; www.calhum.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov







SPLASH
STUDIOS



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DIALOG, FX EDITING,
ADR, FOLEY RECORDING
& MIXING

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New York, New York 10010
Fox: 212 271 8748
e-moil: bplprod@aol.com

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Create in the comfort
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Video for Art's Sake
Independent Post Production
in the East Village

Meg Hanley, *Editor*
212.254.1106

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents this interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw @dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Artists' foundation, committed to supporting individual artists is accepting appls. Download from www.creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900.

CUSTOM HANDCRAFTED IDEAS FOR SALE: Gulleycom Int'l, a small, family-owned company dedicated to creating the most individual advertising & communications, with each word spelled by hand, each graphic lovingly handcrafted. Ads, posters, logos, one-of-a-kind projects & odd lots. If you call, ask for "Granpa"—he'll be out back, shucking headlines. (317) 974-0369; thebigkahuna@gulleycom.com; www.gulleycom.com

EASTMAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Colleges & Univs. in U.S. & Canada which offer a BA/BS/BFA, MA/MFA in film or film production may nominate two students for $5,000 scholarships. Deadline: June 15. For nomination form, write to Betsy A. McLane, Int'l Doc. Association, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative, anim. & exper. projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Oct.15. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

IDA/DAVID L. WOLPER STUDENT DOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: $1,000 honorarium presented annually to recognize exceptional achievement in nonfiction film & video at university level. Films & videos must be produced by registered students & completed between 1/1/99 & 4/15/00. Winner honored at 16th Annual IDA Awards Gala on Oct. 27, has film screened at Docufest on Oct. 28 & receives $1,000 certificate from Eastman Kodak for film stock. Deadline: May 15. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, L.A., CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MEDIA ALLIANCE INDEPENDENT RADIO/SOUND ART FELLOWSHIP provides production support for individual artists working in independent radio or sound art discipline. Three fellowships of $5,000 each will be awarded. Applicants must be working/living w/in five boroughs of NYC. Grant made possible by Jerome Foundation. Deadline: May 15 (postmarked). Contact: Rachel Melman at Media Alliance (212) 560-2919; Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 450 W. 33rd St, NY, NY 10001; www.mediaalliance.org; audiogrant@hotmail.com

NAATA provides funding for independent productions of new Asian American programs for public TV. Current calls incl. annual open call for production funding (postmarked June 2) & open call for completion funding (postmarked Sept. 29). Appl. or info write: NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St. 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distrib. to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS' on the Arts' Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $5,000 in funds for distribution of recently completed independent media arts projects by NY artists. Open to audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work & installation art. Deadline: June 30. For more info: (212) 387-7058; NYSCA-EMF Program, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; cmeyer@nysca.org

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 unique visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites are free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

OPEN CALL 2K: ITVS considers proposals for new innovative programs of standard broadcast length for public television on on-going basis. ITVS seeks provocative, spellbinding stories from diverse points of view & diverse communities. No finished works. Projects in any genre (comedy, satire, anim., drama, doc, exper., short) or stage of development will be considered. Programs should break traditional molds of exploring cultural, political, social, or economic issues, take creative risks, or give voice to those not usually heard. Deadline: Sept. 15. Download applications & guidelines at www.itvs.org. Contact: (415) 356-8383, x. 232; Beky_Hayes@itvs.pbs.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS (PIC) announces Media Fund 2000 call for proposals for programs intended for nat'l public TV. Doc, performance, narrative, anim., children's or cultural affairs programming proposals eligible. PIC particularly interested in projects that examine &

illuminate realities of Pacific Islander issues such as diversity, identity & spirituality. Must be over 60 min. unless part of series. Awards of up to $50,000 avail. for works-in-progress including production, postproduction, marketing & distribution. Research & development & scripting phases may receive up to $15,000. Deadline: May 31. Contact Annie Moriyasu, Media Fund, PIC, 1221 Kapi'olani Boulevard, Ste. 6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814, (808) 591-0059; fax: 591-1114; moriyasu@aloha.net; www.piccom.org

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadlines: May 15 & Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; www.pacificpioneerfund.com

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues w/ goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of prod.; film & video projects in preproduction or distribution stages only. Grants range from $3,000-$8,000. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Viviana Bianchi, Program Officer, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, NY, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

PR FOR YOUR INDIE FILM: Open City Communications provides high-impact, cost-effective public relations support for film & video releases, webcasts, festivals, online sites, books, special events, creative artists & other entities in need of top-quality media attention. For more info: Opencity@aol.com; www.open-city.com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000; max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postproduction services at discounted rates. For rate card & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-9991; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org











CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. JUNE 1 FOR AUG/SEPT ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $65 FOR NONMEMBERS; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $90 FOR NONMEMBERS. INCLUDE VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCLUDE: CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD NUMBER; NAME ON CARD; EXPIRATION DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Ste. 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com. Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

INTERNET DISTRIBUTOR seeks quality independent films for home video and other sales. We offer producers a significant piece of the gross, based on rights package. Check our web site for details & submission info: www.indie-underground.com

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THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

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-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

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BUDGETS/INVESTOR PACKAGE: Experienced Line Producer will prepare script breakdowns, shooting schedules & detailed budgets. Movie Magic equipped. MC, Visa, Amex. Indie rates negotiable. Mark (212) 340-1243.

PRODUCTION OFFICE: West 85th in NYC, fully wired all office equip, Beta, 3/4" dubbing, animation. Avid room as needed. Short or long-term. Dana (212) 501-7878 x. 222.

SU-CITY PICTURES: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic: We provide screenplay/treatment/synopsis/films-in-progress insight/analysis. Studio credentials include: Miramax & Warner Bros. Competitive rates. Brochure: (212) 219-9224; www.su-city-pictures.com

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PRODUCER WITH PRODUCTION OFFICE looking for low budget features to produce in New York. Will provide budgeting/scheduling, production personnel. Video, shorts and feature experience. Call Val at (212) 295-7878; or email me: zelda212@netscape.net

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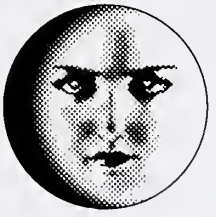
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LUNA DELIVERS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.). AIVF events require advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, AmEx, or Mastercard or mail a check or money order. Your check must be received one week prior to event to reserve your seat. Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.

The followings details were being confirmed at presstime. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

May Events

AFTER HOURS
MEMBER ORIENTATION & OPEN HOUSE

When: May 3 (every first Wednesday), 6-9 p.m. Library open from 11-9.
Where: AIVF Filmmakers Resource Library
Cost: free to all. No RSVP required.

AIVF offers extended Resource Library hours once a month for members as well as the general public. The Filmmakers Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories (*The Hollywood Creative Directory*, *The CPB Directory*, *The Blu-Book*, NYPG) to film history and biographies, along with back issues of trade magazines and film publications. After Hours is also the perfect time to pick up an updated AIVF Member Benefits list, or ask questions about all your membership gets you.

TECHSPEAK
DEMO: MOVIEMAGIC SCHEDULING AND BUDGETING SOFTWARE

When: Thurs., May 11, 6:30 or 8 p.m. (Each session is 1 hr & limited to 10 people.)
Where: Media Services (30 W. 22 St., NYC)
Cost: $10 (members only). RSVP required. Space extremely limited.

MovieMagic software remains the industry's most common solution to scheduling, budgeting, and tracking productions. Take a hands-on tour through these programs features and learn how to use these simple yet powerful tools for your own projects.

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MEET & GREET
NYC EXHIBITION SERIES FOR BLACK FILMMAKERS

When: Tues., May 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free to members/$10 general public

Microcinemas and exhibition series offer valuable exposure to audiences and are becoming incredibly viable alternatives to traditional theatrical distribution. Meet the programmers of three of the hottest microcinemas in New York City: Sheryl Ellison of ReelAlternative Film Salon; Moikgantsi Kgama of ImageNation, and Jeff Friday of Black Cinema Cafe. Find out how these series work with independent makers of color, and how they affect the larger exhibition scene today. Visit our website for links to these progressive programs!

DOCUMENTARY DIALOGUES
PERSPECTIVE AND REPRESENTATION (CO-PRESENTED BY WOMEN MAKE MOVIES)

When: Wed., May 17, 6:30-8 p.m. Wine and Goldfish reception follows!
Cost: $5 (AIVF members and WMM Friends).

Documentary Dialogues is a bi-monthly discussion group comprised of AIVF nonfiction filmmakers. Topics encompass theoretical and philosophical perspectives and approaches to independent film- and videomaking, including often neglected issues of content and ethics. It's also a great way to meet your working peers!

This month's program examines the complex terrain of opting to tell the story of a group you are not part of. Can one community claim to represent another? For example, can a man represent women's perspectives on gender issues? Can makers accurately document social and economic conditions they do not live with day by day?

If you would like to bring an illustrative clip on VHS, please call Michelle Coe at x. 235.

HOW TO PITCH TO PBS
AND OTHER BROADCAST OUTLETS

When: Tues., May 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: TBA
Cost: $10/AIVF members; $15 non-members

They say the average time you have a development or acquisition executive's attention is three minutes. In other words, your pitch had better be good. In this highly demanded event, David Houts will moderate a discussion with PBS and cable reps on the art of verbally selling your project. Then, five members will get to practice-pitch their projects for critique and further discussion.

If you are an AIVF member and would like to pitch your project in front of the group, please contact Michelle Coe at x235 by May 10. For advice on pitching, see *Lessons in Salesmanship*, page 41.

CHAT WITH DOCFEST FILMMAKERS

Details pending at press time; visit www.aivf.org for participants and logistics.

Here's an opportunity to meet artists whose work will be presented in the 2000 DocFest (New York International Documentary Film Festival, May 31-June 4). You need not to have seen the films to partake in this dynamic discussion on nonfiction filmmaking with your peers! Details will be posted at our website.

"docfest"

AIVF on the road

In May, AIVF partners with NAMAC and local organizations for a 3-day celebration of regional media arts communities, including workshops, panels, exhibitions, formal and informal dialogue, and plenty of opportunity to network and discover new local resources! Registration is required for each event, excepting open studios; unless indicated, events are free of charge but space is limited!

MAESTRO!

CELEBRATION OF LOS ANGELES MEDIA ARTS
APRIL 30-MAY 2

Meet NAMAC director Helen de Michiel, AIVF director Elizabeth Peters, program director Michelle Coe, and membership and advocacy director LaTrice Dixon. For event descriptions and to register, call (323) 871-8554 or visit www.aivf.org/maestro

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

2-4pm **Advocacy Forum: Creating Equitable Opportunity**, presented by the AIVF LA Salon, The Village, 1125 N. McCadden Pl., courtyard

8:30pm **Flicker Short Film Showcase**, at Spaceland, 1717 Silverlake Blvd.

MONDAY, MAY 1

9-11am **Media Arts Focus Group**, at The Village, Rm 139

1-3 pm **Lunch for Media Arts Organization Leaders**, at Cha Cha Cha, 656 W. Virgil Ave

2-4 pm **Coffee for Students & Media Artists**, site tba

6-9 pm **Distribution Workshop for Media Artists** Presented by Arthur Dong, at AFI, 2021 Northwestern, (Warner Bldg., Rm 107)

9pm **MAESTRO Mixer**, site tba

TUESDAY, MAY 2

2-4pm **AIVF Mini-meetings**, at The Village, courtyard

5-6:30pm **Media Funding Panel**, presented by Council on Foundations Grantmakers in Film and Electronic Media, USC Annenberg Center

6:30-9pm **Reception and exhibition of contemporary digital projects**, USC Annenberg Center

MAESTRO!

CELEBRATION OF BUFFALO MEDIA ARTS
MAY 11-14

Meet AIVF director Elizabeth Peters, program director Michelle Coe, and NAMAC program associate Dewey Schott. For event descriptions or to register, call (212) 807-1400 x. 244 or visit www.aivf.org/maestro

THURSDAY, MAY 11

Screening of Regional Work

FRIDAY, MAY 12

10-4pm **Open Studios**, site tba

5-6:30pm **Media Funding Panel**, site tba

8pm **Screening at Hallwall's**

SATURDAY, MAY 13

10-1pm **Media Arts Organization Workshop: Diversifying your Funding Base**, site tba

2-4 pm **Self-Distribution Workshop for Media Artists**, at Squeaky Wheel

8pm **Screening of Local Work**, at Squeaky Wheel

SUNDAY, MAY 14

10-11am **Coffee for Students & Media Artists**, site tba

11-12:30pm **Media Arts Focus Group**, at Squeaky Wheel

MAESTRO!

CELEBRATION OF NEW ORLEANS MEDIA ARTS
MAY 19-21

Meet AIVF director Elizabeth Peters, membership & advocacy director LaTrice Dixon, and NAMAC program associate Dewey Schott. For event descriptions and to register, visit www.aivf.org/maestro, or call the New Orleans Film Society at (504) 523-3818.

FRIDAY, MAY 19

10-4pm **Open Studios**, site tba

5-6:30pm **Media Funding Panel**, site tba

8pm **Screening: Danny Plotnick**, at Zeitgeist

SATURDAY, MAY 20

10-1pm **Media Arts Organization Workshop: Diversifying your Funding Base**, at The Colosseum

2-4pm **Self-Distribution Workshop for Media Artists**, presented by Danny Plotnick, at The Colosseum

8pm **Screening of Regional Work**, at Zeitgeist

SUNDAY, MAY 21

10-11am **Coffee for Students & Media Artists**, site tba

11-12:30pm **Media Arts Focus Group**, at NOVAC

Coming in June

STRANGER WITH A CAMERA

AIVF co-sponsors special preview screenings of this provocative P.O.V. program in cities around the country. Stay tuned for details.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS

Minnesota Independent Film Fund: How-to-Apply Workshop. Thurs., May 18, 7-8:30 p.m. at the AIVF office. This is free to any and all who may qualify for the MIFF. For more specifics, see this month's Funder FAQ on page 51 or visit MIFF at www.ifpnorth.org.

DocFest (May 31-June 5). The New York International Documentary Film Festival (a presentation of the New York Documentary Center) is an annual international non-competitive event to celebrate and promote the documentary art form. This year's fest will screen around 20 films and announces an all-new Awards Ceremony on June 1st. For more info: www.docfest.org. AIVF co-sponsors panel discussions during Docfest Weekend.

Select Screenings presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. AIVF members may attend specific series at discounted prices. Please show membership card at box office. Screenings take place at The Walter Reade Theatre, located at Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65 Street at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office, 212/875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

May 3: **Image Innovators: New Super 8 New York**

May 5-18: **Burt Lancaster Retrospective**

May 19-28: **The 6th Annual African Film Festival**

May 22: **Image Innovators: Lewis Klahr's *Engram Sepals (Melodramas 1994-2000)***

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BY LISA VASTA

RUN LIKE A GIRL AND *SMILE PRETTY*, BOTH directed by Carol Cassidy, are part of her "American Girls" series on teenage girls. These two films find girls discussing and defending their lives and lifestyle choices—team sports and beauty pageants respectively. The frustration of the girls in both films becomes apparent as they struggle to meet the requirements of their chosen paths upon reaching adolescence. The main difference between both sets of girls is that those in *Run Like a Girl* are pushing themselves to do better by mastering sports skills and adhering to a disciplined regime, unlike the girls in *Smile Pretty* who are making the most of what they already have. While the latter girls claim to enjoy the pageants for the same reasons the other girls enjoy sports, it just doesn't seem so believable. Only when these pretty girls, as their mothers keep repeating, agree to homogenize themselves and assume the blue-eyed, long-haired ideal (only because they're prettier that way) will they win. Sadly these girls will also use what they've learned as they mature.



SAY CHEESE! from Carol Cassidy's *Run Like a Girl*.

Once Removed, directed by Julie Mallozzi, focuses on the director's visit to China to meet all of her mother's living relatives for the first time. Mallozzi is half-Chinese, half Italian-American, so her film's point of view is of the outsider looking in. Her relatives in China were professionals—academics, engineers etc—and so were targeted during and after the Cultural Revolution. Her grandparents left before the events in the 60s and could not return afterwards. The film illustrates the strangeness of visiting relatives who don't know who you are, although Mallozzi discovers through the course her project that both cultures value core values centering around family and tradition.

Jen Schradie and Matt DeVries' *The Golf War* uses a planned golf course in the Philippines as the catalyst for their film on politics, culture, environment, and revolution. Over 7,500 peasant farmers who have lived and worked for generations on Hacienda Looc, an ancestral land in an unspoiled coastal area, see a governmental edict transferring title to the land to them suddenly revoked. The land was sold to a private company which plans on building an upscale golf course, yacht marina and upmarket housing development on the site. The New People's Army, a paramilitary group, has emerged to fight for the peasants after five protesters were killed and the video chronicles both the armed and unarmed resistance to the golf project.

AIVF Members: Send info on works in progress or recently completed works to: In & Out, *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013; intern@aivf.org

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The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x 224 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.

See Salons at www.aivf.org for further info.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thurs. of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 "N" Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, engntwrk@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, www.mifs.org/salon or (414) 276-8563

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668 or dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; www.members.tripod.com/rochaivf/index.html

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811 or espinosa@electriciti.com

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; rmondar1@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

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This column commemorates the 25th anniversity of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the April issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.



"Should minorities, as their lot improves in this society, use art to create 'positive images' of themselves in order to counter the 'negative images' created by those in power? A tempting proposal indeed, but I am trying to show that this is a catch-22. The creation of images hide us from ourselves. It channels our mental faculties along prescribed lines. And to me it is that mental channeling or control which defines the social state of powerlessness."

Pablo Figuera, 1980

"One of the important differences between independent filmmaking now and then, is that now, independents don't talk to each other about filmmaking. They distrust each other and only talk about funds and distribution, guarding their little projects to their chests."

Leo Hurwitz, 1982

"Most of what is construed as art is bullshit, and video art has an even higher level of bullshit artists."

Edin Valez, 1983

"Now in its third season, [*American Playhouse*] is unique in that it offers filmmakers a more-than-fair contract and the right of final cut. Scripts can be looser and cover wider topics than on most PBS series. *American Playhouse* is noncommercial, yet it has a national television audience. And there is even a potential for theatrical distribution."

Rob Edelman, 1984

"In the past, the realm of the personal has belonged primarily to avant-garde filmmakers, and as a subtext, to fiction filmmakers. These first-person documentaries, though, assert subjectivity, which has long been a dirty word in documentaries, and attempt to reconcile the social with the deeply personal."

David Schwartz, 1986

"Since women have for decades worked hard at widening the definition of 'political,' since there is no subject that is 'apolitical' or too narrow, but only narrow, apolitical representations of subjects, a film does not necessarily need to attack governmental institutions and personalities to be 'political.' "

Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1987

"The most sophisticated interactive technology to date is the interactive videodisc. A marriage of computer and video technologies, interactive videodiscs have the capacity to store and retrieve large quantities of high quality still and moving images and sound."

Lucinda Furlong, 1988

"In the last two to three years, the sheer quantity of work by [Latina] women and the increased opportunities to share contacts and experiences across national boundaries has led to a movement that is changing the shape and the direction of New Latin American Cinema."

Liz Kotz, 1989

"The significance of the features by black directors at this year's [Sundance] was enhanced by their number (one or two wouldn't have had the same impact), the variety, the quality, and the prizes they won. The message seemed clear: independent black feature filmmakers have achieved critical mass."

Peter Broderick, 1990

"Camcorder footage contributes to a broader analysis of an event by offering an alternative to broadcast media's centrist view . . . Community activist documentation opens up the possibility of a diverse range of speakers on a subject, countering the myth that there are only two sides to an issue."

Ellen Spiro, 1991

"The NEA has brought access to the arts to Americans everywhere, and thereby enriched us all. I certainly foresee no lessening of federal funding for the arts in a Clinton Administration."

Bill Clinton, 1992

"From 1863 to 1910, there were 17,600 short films released in the USA. In 1992, the professional short film is nearly nonexistent, and the number of companies producing or acquiring shorts for commercial release can be counted on a few fingers."

Eileen Wilkinson, 1992

"*Bad Lieutenant* isn't a porn film. But like *Reservoir Dogs* and *Laws of Gravity* its interest in violence is in every way prurient. And it is this fact that underscores what has become independent production's new sales tool: violence as a sales tool."

David Ehrenstein, 1993

"While mainstream television has made much ado about its use of 'amateur' video, the few citizen-produced images that actually get on TV represent a lopsided sliver of what's actually out there. U.S. broadcasters seem to have slept through the real camcorder revolution—or, more likely, deliberately sidetracked it."

Laurie Ouellete, 1994

"In various articles, the budget of *The Brothers McMullen* is quoted as being between $17,000 and $30,000 . . .The $7,000 version of *El Mariachi*, a film whose price tag became its news hook, existed only on video and had a terrible soundtrack . . . According to an executive at Sony Pictures Classics, the *El Mariachi* Columbia released was probably at least $300,000, and Fox Searchlight's *Brothers McMullen* was more like $500,000."

Robert Dardon, 1996

"Exhibitors say there's a trend to designate a single screen in a big multiplex as the 'art screen.' In some cities, an entire 4- or 6-plex can be devoted to showing 'specialty films.' "

Dan Mirvish, 1997

"The road to primetime in the new digital era, it seems, will be paved with good intentions—along with pay-per-view programming, home shopping, and personalized advertising."

Gary O. Larson, 1999

COMPILED BY SCOTT CASTLE

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $105,000.

Millennium Campaign Fund

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

Corporate/Government/ Foundation Contributors

BET/Encore; District Cablevision; Home Box Office; New York State Council on the Arts; Ovation; Washington DC Film Society.

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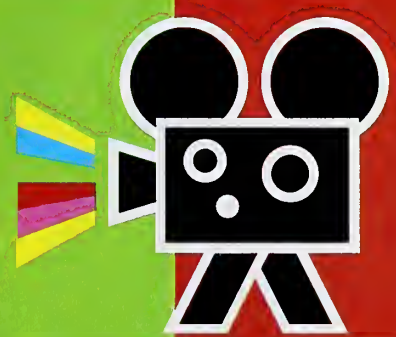
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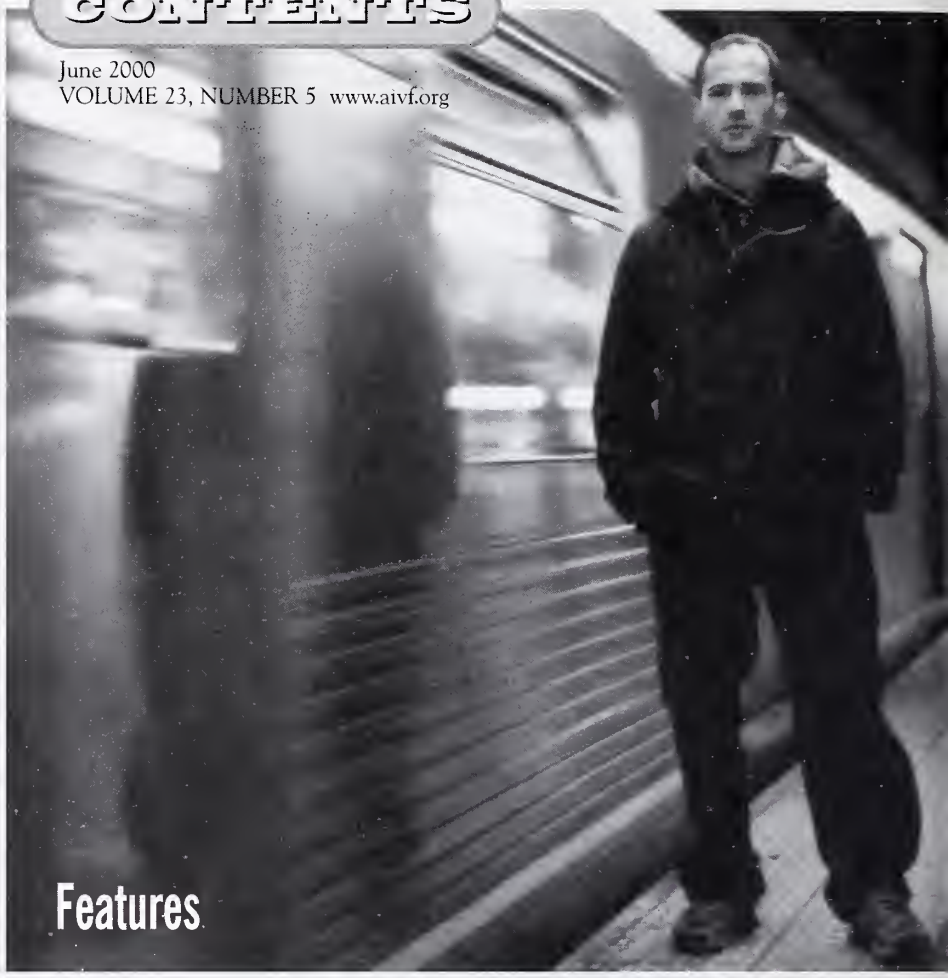
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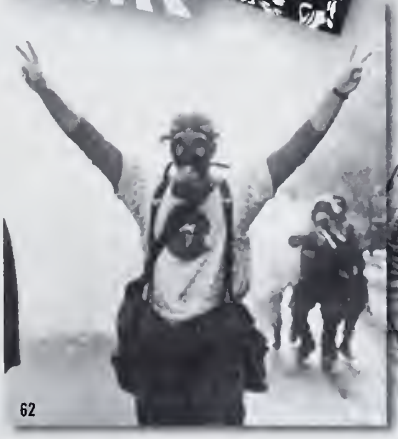












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THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: A TEXTBOOK CASE

To the editor,

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Gary O. Larson for his superb piece on the widening of the Digital Divide ["The Widening Digital Divide: A Fork in the Info Highway," March 2000].

About three years ago I received a call from a nonprofit cultural center in Cleveland, Ohio, for a filmmaking job. They wanted me to do a documentary film on the gentrification of the Hispanic community in Cleveland at the hands of the local Catholic Church's all-male high school. The digital divide became plainly visible to me during my initial conversations with the center's board of directors. There was not a PC in sight, and when I talked to them about the Internet, it was as if I was speaking in a foreign language. And I'm fluent in Spanish! However, I was not prepared and could not understand how an entire community (50,000+) had been left out of the information superhighway. Basically, this community doesn't have the resources to afford personal computers, and in addition, their school system is seriously without funds; of all the public schools that I visited, not one had a personal computer. Finally, rather than benefiting personally from making the documentary, I helped the cultural center establish a computer center. I just could not, in good conscience, take their money.

Miguel Baldoni Olivencia
via email

MIXING IT UP

To the editor:

Thank you so much for publishing Mark Huisman's article on MIX NYC—the 13th New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival, and especially for its focus on MIX's preservation project ["Lucky 13," March 2000]. *The Independent* should do everything it can to encourage the media community to ensure that the extremely important work we do survives.

I would like to clarify two points, however. First, the AIDS Activist Video Project sponsored by the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS will indeed include the work of numerous lesbians (and straight women), including Jean Carlomusto, Catherine Gund, Barbara Hammer, Carol Leigh, the Scarlot Harlot, Alexandra Juhasz, Juanita Mohammed, Ellen Spiro, and the Women's AIDS Video Enterprise, among others.

Second, although it would be great to strike a second internegative and store it in separate facilities—if any filmmaker can afford it—it is not possible to do so on reversal stock. Rather, it is because most experimental films were shot on reversal stocks that internegatives are necessary to preserve them.

Jim Hubbard, MIX cofounder & board president, *New York, NY*

Mark J. Huisman replies:

While I'm happy to hear that MIX's preservation project will include so many important female artists, I am still surprised and disappointed the organization didn't even mention that fact in any of its materials. As to my error about reversal stock and internegatives, well, there you got me.



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Cutting Classes

The Edit Center in NYC

BYPASSING THE NEED FOR LONG TRAINEE AND assistant editorships, New York's The Edit Center has been offering budding editors a way to get hands-on experience in postproduction in a fraction of the time by putting students to work on low-budget documentaries or narrative features.

Alan Oxman, a veteran film editor with credits that include Todd Solondz's *Happiness*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, and James Toback's *Two Girls and a Guy*, launched The Edit Center last November to teach people with no technical background what he calls the "art of editing." To do this, Oxman and three other teachers spend one week teaching students the Avid. Then each student is given his or her own scenes and spends the next five weeks cutting them with the supervision of the teaching staff and periodic meetings with the director. "The fact that you're working on a real movie and the director's counting on you creates a level of enthusiasm that helps you learn," says Oxman.

The five students enrolled in The Edit Center's second class, which began in mid-January, worked with actor-turned-director Ethan Hawke to edit his upcoming MiniDV feature *Last Word on Paradise*, which stars Kris Kristofferson, Uma Thurman, Natasha Richardson, and Kevin Corrigan. After only two weeks in the course, students met with Hawke for over two hours to screen their first cuts. "I love the pieces that you chose," Hawke told Deepa Donde, a student with no prior editing or Avid experience, after viewing her rough cut. "Pick stuff you like, make it long, then we can cut."

Hawke agreed to let Oxman and his students begin editing his film, which features major talent but a mere $100,000 budget, because the idea of working with students appealed to him. "There are so many story lines in the movie, I wanted a lot of people giving input," says Hawke. "And students' minds are more open to breaking conventions."

Students won't finish editing a film during the six-week class, but Oxman expects that a student or teacher could stay on to finish the projects. For Hawke's film, teacher Adriana Pacheco will finish the editing, a solution that pleases Hawke. "Ultimately, you have to have one point of view coming across in the editing."



WAITING FOR THE CUT: Kris Kristofferson, in Ethan Hawke's MiniDV feature *Last Word on Paradise*, cut by students from The Edit Center

At a cost of $5,200, The Edit Center's six-week program is the longest and most expensive of similar programs on offer in New York. And unlike some of the other editing classes available that assume either editing or computer experience, Oxman's class has no prerequisites.

Among other New York editing opportunities are educational programs offered by Film/Video Arts (F/VA), which runs five Avid classes including a 16-hour introduction to the Avid for $550 and an intensive one-week course for $1,100. "Our Avid courses are designed for editors who are learning the Avid system," explains Marguerite Ruscito, F/VA's head of education. Nonprofit arts organization Harvestworks offers nine-hour courses in Media 100 and Final Cut Pro for $360. According to education director Laurie Halsey Brown, Harvestworks' classes are "quick and cheap. They're a jumping-off point for artists." Outpost Digital, just over a year old, teaches all desktop postproduction, specializing in Final Cut Pro. "We are known for our one-on-one training," says president Evan Schechtman, with rates starting at $145 per hour and going down with additional hours. Outpost Digital offers individuals and groups a six-hour Final Cut Pro class for $725 and a 20-hour desktop postproduction class for $1,450. (AIVF members receive a 10% discount.) "We work with everyone from people who have never made a cut to accomplished film directors," Schechtman says.

The Edit Center doesn't offer students college credit, but Oxman says he's already gotten calls from people looking for assistant editors. And one student from the first class, Alice Wu, already landed a job with Oxman's help editing a short for filmmaker Kit Hui.

The students working on Hawke's film are only the second group to come through The Edit Center, but they seemed thrilled to be part of the experiment. "I wasn't planning to spend February this way, but I realized I would kick myself for not doing it," says Richard Reiss, a director who wanted to study scene structure. And two weeks into the program, all the students say they've already learned a lot. "I have no technical background, but Alan and Adriana have really made it accessible," says Donde. Students are working exclusively on the Avid, but in upcoming classes, scheduled to begin June 5 and November 13, students may be working on Final Cut Pro, depending on the format of the films.

> **"The fact that [students] are working on a real movie and the director's counting on you creates a level of enthusiasm that helps you learn."**
> **—Alan Oxman**

The directors who have worked with The Edit Center appear pleased as well. After his first student screening, during which he shared many ideas and encouragement, Hawke was enthusiastic. "I feel really excited," he confided to Oxman and Pacheco. "This shit is great!"

The Edit Center can be reached at (212) 387-7844; www.theeditcenter.com

MARGARET CHABOWSKI

Margaret Chabowski [mchabowski@mindspring.com] is a freelance writer based in New York City.



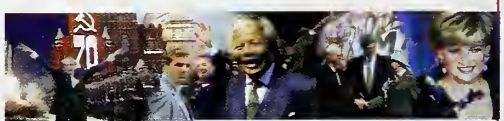


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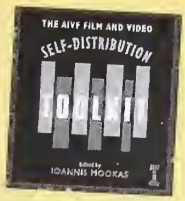
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The mission of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is to increase the creative and professional opportunities for independent video and filmmakers and to ensure and enhance the growth of independent media by providing services, advocacy and information. In these ways, AIVF promotes diversity and democracy in the communication and expression of ideas and images.

AIVF Founding Principles:

1 The Association is an organization of and for independen video- and filmmakers.

2 The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video ar filmmaking is more than just a job, that it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.

3 The Association works, through the combined efforts o the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5 The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

DOT-COMS BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO SHORT FILMS

"I REMEMBER WORKING AT DISNEY IN 1980 AND talking about the death of animation and shorts," said director Tim Burton at a Sundance Film Festival press conference in January, where his deal with shockwave.com was announced. "It seemed bleak at that time, but the Internet has given new life to short films."

San Francisco-based web company Shockwave recently added a few legendary names to its roster when it announced partnerships with Burton, Stan Lee, creator of the *Spider Man* character, *South Park*-ers Matt Stone and Trey Parker, and most recently, David Lynch in a highly touted campaign to create original short animation programs for its website, www.shockwave.com. Stone and Parker will be developing a totally new short animation series for the site, which Shockwave chairman Rob Burgess says will redefine the limits for the foul-mouthed duo, as it will be immune from FCC oversight. Burton is bringing his not-so-heroic superhero Stain Boy to life, taken from the pages of his 1997 book of illustrated poems, *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories*. In addition to a hefty sign-on bonus, each of the directors is said to be receiving equity in the company in return for their efforts. But while the Shockwave drive to recruit major industry names is one of the more high profile cases, incentives for first-time and independent short filmmakers are also on the rise.

Seattle's iCAST recently announced a new program to provide short filmmakers with cash awards ranging from $15,000 to $40,000 in a new contest to promote short films on their website www.icast.com. Judges will include Michael Lehman (*Heathers*), producer Mitchell Robins (*Squeeze*), and Cauleen Smith (*Drylongso*). At the same time, new partnerships between iFilm and CineNow with streaming video giant Vidnet are providing an increasingly larger platform for short films on the web.

Christopher Bell, a 26-year-old filmmaker picked up the title Filmmaker of the Future—and a Sony DVX 900 camera—in March at the premiere Yahoo! Internet Life Film Festival in Los Angeles for his short *Billy Jones*, the comical story of a youngster seduced by the ultra-slick advertisements of Dirty Dawg Cigarettes. "I think up until just like eight months ago, even if you produced a top of the line short film, only about 2,000 people would ever see it, and all of them would be in the New York or L.A. area," says Steve Hein, who produced *Billy Jones*. "Now, because of the Internet, people from all over the world can see films that helped launch a director's career."

iFilm is also helping neophyte short filmmakers gain exposure in the off-line film industry, as well. A year-old division of iFilm, called iFilm-pro, provides an exclusive web forum for distributors and other film industry professionals to see the work of new filmmakers. First-time directors Jason Ward and David Garett recently got a TV comedy series deal with Fox after their short film *Sunday's Game* was up on the site for less than 48 hours.



Another site, Anti.com, which is geared toward teenage short filmmakers and the young people who have grown up watching films on the web, will be recruiting the true next generation of filmmkakers when it launches with a major campaign this summer. For those sceptics who believed that the digital tidal wave would flood the market, there are as many canny websites capitalizing on the boom.

RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor at The Independent.

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DOIN' THE DISTRIBUTOR JIG

WHILE THERE'S BEEN A PROLIFERATION OF DOT-com distributors recently, the conventional world of distribution has also seen some changes of late. Two new companies have emerged in the past few months, and three others have formed a strategic alliance.

Unapix, which had operated as a video distributor for the past seven years, launched **Unapix Films Theatrical** in April. Under the stewardship of Richard Abramowitz, the company's president, the New York-based venture has already acquired two titles: Ron Mann's marijuana documentary *Grass* (see p. 28) and Jon Shear's debut feature, *Urbania*. Abramowitz, a former executive at Strato-sphere Entertainment, noted that it's "possible, even likely" that the new company will set up a pay-TV relationship with "the appropriate company."

Paul Cohen, former CEO of Stratosphere, is opening his doors this month under the **Next Millennium Entertainment** banner. The company, also based in New York, whose principals include actor Stephen Baldwin and former nightclub owner Neil Cohen, will be involved in distribution as well as production. Next Millennium hopes to distribute up to six titles in its first year, while the company's production slate will extend to three to four $2-$6 million features per year which will, according to Cohen, be "American independent, narrative- and script-driven films, rather than action or genre films." Asked whether he felt that the distribution arena is getting overcrowded, Cohen responded, "I don't think the marketplace is any more or less crowded than before: it's cyclical and, more than ever, there's a demand for good films."

Meanwhile, **Stratosphere Entertainment**, **Samuel Goldwyn Films**, and **CanWest Global Communications** (a majority owner of Seventh Arts) have set up "an operational joint venture in domestic theatrical distribution," according to Ronna Wallace, executive vice-president, production and acquisitions at Stratosphere. The three companies will remain completely autonomous, however, competing for acquisitions as before. What's changed is the pooling of publicity and marketing resources, whereby "the entire function of *releasing* a film will be a joint venture," says Wallace.

PAUL POWER

NALIP CONFERENCE GEARS UP

NEXT MONTH WILL SEE THE SECOND NATIONAL Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) national conference. The event, "Latino Media: Challenges in the New Millennium," which runs from July 6-9, will be held in Miami Beach, Florida. Conference organizers are expecting an attendance of 300 Latino producers.

NALIP was formed last year to address the professional needs of Latino media producers. "Latino producers need to become a more central part of the debate over media representation," says conference co-chair Moctezuma Esparza (producer of *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge* and *Price of Glory*). "NALIP aims to do just that." To that end, there will be three threads to the conference, says co-chair Frances Negrón-Muntaner: ensuring that Latinos are working in all sectors of the film and television industry; opening up opportunities for young people; and an examination of the digital revolution and how it affects the Latino filmmaking community. "The goal is to increase networking on all fronts, from community-based production to global media," she adds.

The conference will include panels and workshops on cable financing and distribution; the growth and bilingual capacities of Spanish-language media; the creation of business plans; and developing the art of the pitch. Coverage of last year's conference is included in *The Future of Latino Independent Media: A NALIP Sourcebook*, published recently by UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center publications. Other topics examined in the book include Hollywood's Latino imagery, portrayal of Latinos on TV, and Latino advocacy under the heading 'Taking on Hollywood,' while 'The Makers Speak Out' section covers such topics as 'Latino Media Aesthetics' and experimental Latino work. A useful 'Latinos in Media Directory' is included, along with NALIP's statement to CPB.

Invited speakers for July include Congressman Esteban Torres, performance artist Marga Gomez, National Council of La Raza president Raul Yzaguirre, ITVS program manager Richard Saiz, and UCLA Film and Television professor Chon A. Noriega. For further conference details, or to order the *Sourcebook*: (612) 874-2819; www.nalip.org

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Aviva Kempner

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HANK GREENBERG

BY MARK J. HUISMAN



COURTESY COWBOY BOOKING

ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY. BASEBALL DIDN'T become an American institution overnight. So what's the big deal if Aviva Kempner took 4,745 days (and nights)—13 years—to make her second documentary, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*? "When I was in my eleventh year, the Muhammed Ali film [*When We Were Kings*] came out after 22 years," Kempner laughs, "so I thought, 'Oh, I'm only halfway there.' In 1998 Mark McGwire hit 58 home runs, tying Hank's record. Luckily I was not done then because I would have listed the tie, missing the higher numbers of the glorious race between McGwire and Sosa."

Kempner was born in Berlin but grew up watching Greenberg with her father at Detroit's Tiger Stadium. She, like thousands of other Americans, became a fan of the first Jewish baseball player to rise to the top of the big leagues. "Like many immigrants, we became Americanized by learning to love baseball," she says. "Hank's story is seventy years old, so most people don't know about him. But the story of how Hank went to synagogue on Yom Kippur instead of the stadium in 1934 is the stuff of great folklore in Jewish homes."

Greenberg died in 1986 as Kempner's first film, *Partisans of Vilna*, a story about the Jewish resistance during WWII, was opening. Kempner decided to make a film tribute to both Greenberg and her father, and to also honor her mother's experience as a Holocaust survivor. "My mother was spared Auschwitz because she was green-eyed and blond-haired and passed for a German Catholic," Kempner recalls. "And my mother never talked about that time in her life."

After Kempner's birth in 1946, the family emigrated to the U.S. and ended up in Detroit, only to discover the place remained a hotbed of anti-Semitism. The notorious Father Coughlin preached against Jews from his local pulpit; automobile honcho Henry Ford published anti-Semitic books. This past thoroughly informs Kempner's belief in cinema as a vehicle for change.

"I'm like a lot of second-generation immigrants, and African-American, Asian, and Latin filmmakers. We are making films about our families' pasts. And we are motivated by telling untold stories and countering Hollywood stereotypes: drunk Irishmen, murdering Italians, nebbishy Jewish men." This past and her direct connection to it kept Kempner going for those 13 years. "I went from directing to producing and producing to directing," she says. "Raising money to working, working to raising money. Nobody ever worked for me for free, and I never paid myself. I stopped and started a hundred times." Kempner, who has a bachelor's degree in psychology, a masters in urban planning, and a law degree, also spent some time on other cinematic passions: founding Washington's Jewish Film Festival, writing film journalism, and curating film series.

But fundraising for her $1 million project was particularly arduous. Kempner had previously formed a 501(c)(3), The Ciesla Foundation (which uses her mother's maiden name in honor of the aunts and other relatives sent to their deaths at Auschwitz) for *Vilna*, which was funded mostly by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. But when Kempner went back to the NEH for *Greenberg*, another batter was already at the plate.

"Ken Burns was doing *Baseball*. It was just a coincidence. I had to apply for all regional grants [instead]," she says. "I admire Ken's work, but I was probably the one filmmaker affected most by *Baseball*. On the other hand, he helped prove baseball is a legitimate subject for historical documentaries."

But Kempner redoubled her efforts. DuArt and Sound One pitched in with invaluable deferments. And the Greenberg family "totally came through." Norman Lear, about whom Kempner had written, sent letters to all of his Hollywood pals. As a result, Mike Ovitz, Kirk Douglas, Leonard Nimoy, and Steven Spielberg's National Foundation for Jewish Culture all sent checks.

Just before the film was finished for the 1998 Independent Feature Film Market, Kempner's prized Steenbeck, housed in her Washington, D.C. home, caught fire. She arrived in New York with no print to show, armed only with fliers comparing Greenberg's feats to the then-current battle between Sosa and McGuire. Producers' rep Neil Friedman of Menemsha Films contacted Kempner, saw the film, and signed on.

"When we started getting distribution offers, Neil gave me great advice," Kempner recalls. "I had shot in 16mm and blown it up. The distributors wanted everything: 35mm, video, all the rights. Neil said not to sell everything off, that we should find someone to book the film." They turned to Cowboy Booking, whose co-president John Vanco was so enthused that he told Kempner the film made him "so proud to be Jewish—and I'm not even Jewish!" The documentary's success has astonished everyone: a $300,000 gross in Boston, Baltimore, Detroit, and New York in just three months. "None of us ever dreamed the film would do so well," Kempner admits. "You can't imagine what it means now to talk to the Greenberg family and share their joy. Or to know that my mother, an artist herself, who worried about me for thirteen years, can see me standing proud. Or that I can walk into a movie theater and watch Hank flicker to life thirty feet tall."

Mark J. Huisman, a contributing editor at The Independent, *is a New York-based indie producer.*











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Lisa Gossels & Dean Wetherell

THE CHILDREN OF CHABANNES

BY EMILY BOBROW

IT HAS BEEN 55 YEARS SINCE THE END OF WWII, but somehow we've still not reconciled ourselves with this chapter in history. The main obstacle has not necessarily been Hitler's frightful dogmatism, but rather the tragedies born of feigned ignorance and disastrous neglect by governments and individuals alike.

Films like *The Children of Chabannes* help provide a necessary antidote. Documenting the heroism of a small French town during WWII, this feature debut for New York filmmakers Lisa Gossels and Dean Wetherell trains its lens on remarkable individuals who saved the lives of hundreds of Jewish children by defying Nazi orders and showing a simple humanity.



COURTESY FILMMAKERS

"They did it because it was the right thing to do," Gossels says of the people of Chabannes. "What I love about the story is that it really shows how a handful of people can make a difference."

From 1939 to 1942, Chabannes was a refuge for over 400 Jewish children sent by their parents from areas under German control. A small rural village located in the Creuse region of Unoccupied France, Chabannes was established under the auspices of the OSE—an international child welfare organization—as a haven for children fleeing religious persecution and almost certain death.

At the Chateau de Chabannes, these children were integrated with the village children and cared for by a handful of intrepid and courageous educators. However, by late 1942 the Nazis were hovering at the chateau's doorstep, and the children were forced to disperse. Of the 400 Jewish children, all but six were safely smuggled away before the Nazis could deport them, and two of those six survived.

The catalyst for this documentary was a reunion between the children survivors and the Chabannes residents who cared for them. Notably, two of these surviving children are Gossels's father and uncle. "On May 1st 1996 my father let me know there was going to be a reunion in Chabannes," Gossels explains. "When I heard that, I just felt like this is never going to happen again."

The pending reunion clearly spoke to Gossels. She had heard only fragments of her father and uncle's story throughout her life, and was lured by the possibility of discovering more. This mix of the personal and historical made Chabannes seem a fitting subject for her first feature—a welcome departure from a career of directing industrials and contributing to other filmmakers' projects. "I spent a lot of my career nurturing other creative people," says Gossels. "I was always part of the creative process, but never at the center of it. I think the timing was right for me."

Gossels phoned Wetherell, her partner on a number of commercial projects, and asked if he would be interested in making this film—"not based on a reunion but based on the story, *if* we find a story." Wetherell, who has been working in film since receiving his masters in documentary film at Stanford in 1981, was immediately interested. "I always wanted to get back to documentary filmmaking," he explains, "but the demands of real life, children, and mortgages got in the way. I needed something I could get passionate about." After hearing Wetherell's prompt "yes," Gossels spent a sleepless night "just brainstorming and imagining what this could be. And four weeks later, we were in France with a film crew."

They ended up with 90 hours of footage. "There were so many stories," says Gossels. After "ruthlessly" editing it down to 90 minutes, the filmmakers now have a significant oral history of the chateau during WWII, comprising interviews with the revisiting "children," the surviving chateau educators (compelling figures in their late 80s and early 90s), and a smattering of historians. At times, their recollections are paired with a panorama of the still-pristine Creuse region or, rather poignantly, pictures of the young interviewees from their time at the chateau.

Significantly, the focus is on the adults' personal recollections of themselves as children—that is, on the individual. "I think the idea of six million just doesn't have any impact any more, because it's such a big number," Gossels explains. "So when we looked at the story of Chabannes, we started talking about daily life and the joys and fears the kids had, what they went through. You really get into that mindset of what life was like, and what it was like for a child to be separated from his parents." From this, she says, "we were able to distill these big figures from the war, to humanize it."

Shot on 16mm and Beta, *Chabannes* was initially paid for by Gossels and Wetherell. Foundations, they found, are not looking to fund another "second-generation Holocaust film." The approximately $250,000 needed to finish the film was raised mainly from clients and friends.

Since the film's premiere at the DoubleTake Documentary Film Festival in 1999, Gossels has been hopping from festival to festival with incredible energy. "As soon as you are done with your film, the work begins," she admits. But Gossels doesn't mind. "I've seen this film 200 times, and I'm still in awe of what these people say."

The Children of Chabannes will air on HBO Signature on June 11 and Castle Hill Productions will open the film in New York City on June 9.

Emily Bobrow is a freelance writer based in New York.

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Michael Camerini & Shari Robertson

WELL-FOUNDED FEAR

BY CLEO CACOULIDIS



"THIS IS A FILM ABOUT JUDGMENT NOT WORKing," says documentary filmmaker Michael Camerini, as he and co-director Shari Robertson discuss their latest work, *Well-Founded Fear*. The two-hour documentary is a trenchant look at the inner workings of the political asylum office of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and it marks the first time ever that a film crew has been granted access to confidential asylum proceedings.

Given their history of tackling complicated film subjects, maneuvering through the bureaucracy of the INS seems a natural choice for these directors. Robertson's previous work includes films about the Khmer Rouge guerrillas in Cambodia and the American drug war in Peru. Camerini has similarly crisscrossed the globe, creating films on topics such as women's rights and social change in India and producing *Local Heroes, Global Change*, a four-hour documentary series shot in 10 countries. Since 1993, the husband-and-wife team have completed *These Girls Are Missing*, a look at the life of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa, *Tashilham*, an examination of artist Irving Kriesberg's 32-part diptych, and *Well-Founded Fear*.

Shot in an unassuming, observational style that underscores the filmmakers' ethnographic background, *Well-Founded Fear* focuses on the emotionally-charged interviews that are the core of the asylum process. As the camera steals behind the INS's electronic doors, the audience is plunged into a labyrinth of sterile white hallways and identical office cubicles. With its heavy use of close-ups, the film emphasizes the intense nature of asylum proceedings. In this circumscribed world, even ordinary gestures and bureaucratic minutiae—such as foreign passports and papers being passed between anonymous hands—seem to take on tremendous significance, as if they might somehow provide clues as to which refugees will be deported and which will be permitted to stay.

Skillfully following several stories, the film introduces us to a diverse array of asylum officers and applicants. Candid discussions reveal the enormous difficulties inherent in the existing asylum process. For the officers, there is a tremendous struggle to determine whether an applicant is telling the truth and whether the applicant's experiences meet the standard of a "well-founded fear of persecution" in their home country. For the asylum seekers, there is the daunting task of having to express, as an applicant named Cristian says, "a life experience in a few minutes." Applicants must dredge up painful memories and recall exact dates and places of events that may have happened years before.

Interestingly, the filmmakers chose to exclude interviews with human rights advocates or immigration attorneys, individuals who often play a critical role in the asylum process. Nor is there a mention of the many unscrupulous characters who prepare boilerplate applications for unsuspecting asylum seekers. Although compelling in its emotional point of view, *Well-Founded Fear* decontextualizes the enormously complex issue of political

COURTESY FILMMAKERS

asylum by eschewing factual information in favor of subjective experiences.

From the filmmakers' perspective, one of the goals of the film was to "draw you in as a viewer, to [allow you to] experience the position of the asylum officer and the applicant," Camerini explains. "We felt that if you were seduced, as these officers are seduced, by the idea of judgement and the idea of knowledge, and then you found that it would lead you to make the kind of mistakes you see being made in the film, then you would have a new perspective on the idea of asylum, the need to defend it, and the need to do better."

Indeed, the film's voiceover suggests that the process is one of "asylum roulette." The subjective feelings of the asylum officer, the credibility of the applicant, the degree of the applicant's preparation for the interview, and even the skills of the translator all come into play in a legal system that is supposed to be based on evidence and impartiality.

Originally conceived as a six-part series on asylum and refugees, the project was shelved when Robertson and Camerini were unable to secure distribution and their promised funding evaporated. Months later, after talking with a friend who became an INS asylum officer, says Robertson, "we suddenly knew that, okay, we can't get the series on television, but *this* subject [the INS asylum process] is made for television, and we changed course." Once they obtained permission to shoot at the INS, the team was able to raise monies from a variety of foundations. (It was not until they had an almost completed film in hand that they approached PBS.)

Shot on 16mm rather than on video because, as Camerini notes, "film is more beautiful and more tender," the project took three years to complete: nine months of intensive research, a year of shooting—which produced 85 hours of footage in 26 languages—followed by 14 months of editing.

"This is not about a process [of seeking asylum]," Camerini insists, and Robertson concurs, as much as it is about "a meditation on a set of ideas about us [Americans] and the world and our relationship to it that is expressed during the [asylum] interviews." Let's hope that Americans take notice.

Well-Founded Fear airs on PBS's *P.O.V.* series on June 5. A companion web site [www.pbs.org/pov/wellfoundedfear] is intended to be an immigration resource tool for advocates and asylum applicants alike.

Cleo Cacoulidis is a New York-based freelance journalist.

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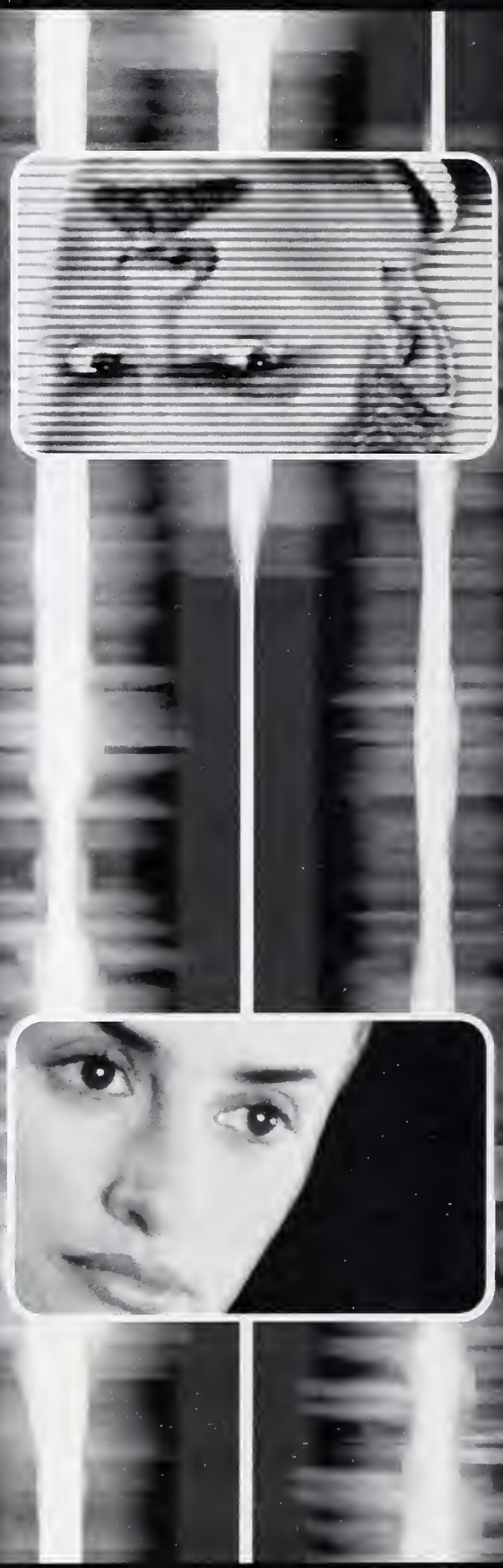
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Look Deeper

The New York Underground Film Festival

BY SCOTT CASTLE

WHEN THE OSCAR FOR Best Picture goes to a film that showcases pot smoking, voyeurism, and masturbation, how far do you have to dig to get underground, and what will you find when you get there? The 7th New York Underground Film Festival, held March 8-14, answered that question again and again, showing a week of films that defied easy classification and attracting an audience for every one. The films' content and techniques ranged wildly, sharing only the underground ethic to tell their story without adhering to pre-cut audience expectations.



DON'T LOOK BACK, PENNEBAKER: Randy Bell and Justin Rice in *Look Back, Don't Look Back.*

Inset: Revellers Jerry (star of *Rock Opera*) and Silver Man at the fest's blow-out party.

After whittling down a record 1,200 submissions to a final 140, festival director Ed Halter created the festival's biggest year yet without sacrificing its DIY sensibility. The expanded roster included an additional screening venue at CB's 313 Gallery, more music at the adjacent, legendary underground venue CBGBs, more panels than previous years, plus two more days to fit it all in. On opening night, a long line crept around the Anthology Film Archives, a phenomenon repeated for the duration for the festival, which clearly had its most successful year, maintaining an energizing, let's-put-on-a-show mentality while performing like a well-oiled machine. "The goal was to create an enormous party around all of these films," says Halter.

The strongest aspect was the number and diversity of this year's documentaries. The opening night film, Lech Kowalski's *Born to Lose* (a Johnny Thunders biopic), and Frank Pavich's *New York Hard Core* came with custom-tailored audiences filling every seat. The enjoyment of being in a room filled with adamant fans was undercut only by the lack of expository info in some docs that could enlighten audience members who are strangers to the film's topic. An admirable exception was Jasmine Dellal's *American Gypsy*, a documentary that provided a revelatory look into a culture whose customs are unknown because fraternizing with outsiders is forbidden. Other notable docs included Jason Rosette's Best Documentary winner *BookWars*, about New York City's street booksellers, and *Amerikan Passport*, Reed Paget's intriguing, personal travelogue of international war zones.

The always mind-blowing short programs boasted unfathomable titles (*Smells Like Tasty*) while showcasing some of the festival's best films. The popular habit of manipulating existing materials for your own selfish, artistic gains was exemplified by two standouts: *Special Report* and *The Manipulators*. The former deftly put B movie dialogue in the mouths of America's news anchors, while the latter won Best Short by attacking a women's magazine with white-out and marker animation. The numerous shorts screenings were a forceful reminder that watching a short online, with its postage stamp size and herky-jerky movement, defies comparison to seeing it on a towering screen in a crowded, responsive theater.

Shocking an audience which prides itself on "been there, done that" bravado is rare. A gloriously subversive exception was Miranda July's Movie Presentation. After showing a selection of experimental women's films, July (a.k.a. Miss Moviola) gave an "I.Q. test" that began with math problems before becoming increasingly surreal. As the trip neared its end, her questions mingled with video projections, audience confusion peaked, and a palpable, unsettling vibe permeated the room.

The festival was well-represented with fiction features, too: Bob Ray's *Rock Opera*, a THC-infused comedy, kept its late night audience laughing throughout. James Fotopoulos' *Migrating Forms* was a twisted, minimalist meditation on a dysfunctional relationship that took Best Film. However, Todd Verow's achingly dull *A Sudden Loss of Gravity* is on the very short list of films I've ever walked out of.

The festival's creatively-titled panels (co-presented by AIVF) attempted to address the two most common questions Halter hears from filmmakers. "Thank You for the Music" offered advice from experts on music licensing, along with a packet containing helpful, sample contracts, while "What the Fuck's Up with this Online Shit?" raised more questions than it answered. Nonetheless, it did reveal that though online festivals can't adequately explain their benefits, they still want your films—your "content"—just the same.

This year the festival also expanded its

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online interaction by adding a partnership with Insound.com. In addition to giving out $15,000 in Internet Cash, a type of web currency, the site streamed daily reports from the festival, screened shorts, trailers, and even provided visitors the opportunity to purchase selected festival films.

Welcoming Jameson whiskey as its first major sponsor, Halter displayed an acute understanding of his audience's needs and expectations as the festival grows. He hopes they weren't "too insulted" by the pre-film Jameson trailer, but used the company's cooperative attitude to improve the all-important parties. Although festival-goers may have an aversion to corporate sponsorship, that doesn't affect the long line for free whiskey.

This year's gamut of films, so varied in content, were exhibited in stellar surroundings: crowded, appreciative theaters with patrons there to see the films, not sample them. But with the festival primed to expand again next year, the question arises: how big is too big? If the festival continues to operate with more self-awareness than blind ambition, they should be fine for years to come. The only thing they're in danger of selling out is more screenings.

Scott Castle is a freelance writer and the listings editor at The Independent.

A REAL SUMMIT

BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE



A MAMMOTH PARTY for the Discovery Channel, and (above right) distributor Marc Smolowitz does table talk.

THE SECOND ANNUAL REAL SCREEN SUMMIT ("the conference about the business of factual programming") attracted hundreds of participants from some 15 countries to Washington, D.C. last February. A few were trapped and others foiled as winter weather scrambled air connections, but those who attended were, by and large, pleased to have invested their sizeable $645-$1,045 conference fee.

The majority of attendees were independent producers, but broadcasters, funders, and publishers also attended. Some came for the deal-making. "I had a couple of meetings that made it all worth it," said Bill Nemtin of Lark International, an international distributor of public TV programs. Others wanted an overview. "It's an exploding marketplace," said Rees Candee, a Chicago-based producer: "Prices, who's doing what, the story on rights—I'm trying to get it all." Others still were learning the scene. "To meet the decision-makers, to see how they talk, what they want—it's very useful," said Canadian Ari Cohen, who was finishing a documentary on blacks in hockey.

The conference was presented by the publishers of *Real Screen*, a Canadian-based film magazine, which organized three days of workshops, panels, and receptions, all with corporate sponsors. Why Washington, D.C.? Because PBS and the commercial program services headquartered there, such as National Geographic and Discovery, give it critical mass for documentary producers.

This year's conference expanded offerings,

with two or three concurrent panels throughout the day. Formats were master classes and panels, often featuring a case study. Subjects included tips on shooting in high definition; negotiating distribution contracts; the pitching and budgeting of how-tos and talk shows for daytime cable; country focuses; ancillary markets; and wildlife programming.

The imparted wisdom ranged from the familiar to the trend-tracking. Newbies could learn that festivals lend more prestige to a feature than a market; the key to profitability in daytime lifestyle production for cable channels is to combine in-studio efficiency and volume; story always matters; and that the cable window in the U.S. for subtitled documentary features is, um, small.

Among the trends were rights wrangles, exploration of Internet platforms, and the popularity of docu-soaps. Sales agents and distributors begged producers not to sell rights prematurely, while cable programmers told them they might not have a choice. "We don't even know what 'backend' means anymore," said Joyce Richman of Home & Garden Television.

In a docu-soaps master class, producer Jeremy Mills discussed the choices involved in making these real-life series. Mills recounted his success with British series, mostly anchored in institutions—a hospital, an airport, a hotel. He is now producing another airport series for A&E. Lynne Kirby of Court TV noted that her program service is running several docu-soaps. Jeffrey Tuchman, having produced docu-soaps for cable, has now taken real-life drama out on the Net. His and Steve Rosenbaum's Camera Planet.com will showcase do-it-yourself storytelling, which is provoked, encouraged, and edited by the site's producers. The site's channels include dating, extreme sports, and job stories. "The Internet is emerging as the right place for this work," said Tuchman. Distributors also noted the arrival of Internet-based clearinghouses for documentary, including edudex.com and docos.com.

Conferees often found themselves in a unique crossover zone where public service and business savvy met. "Producers like us are letting people here see there's still a reason to make programs because you believe in them," said Gordon Quinn, executive producer of *Hoop Dreams*, who spoke about his current project on immigration, *The New Americans*. "At the same time, we need to learn more about what draws an audience and how the market works."

Pat Aufderheide is a professor in the School of Communication at American University in Washington D.C.



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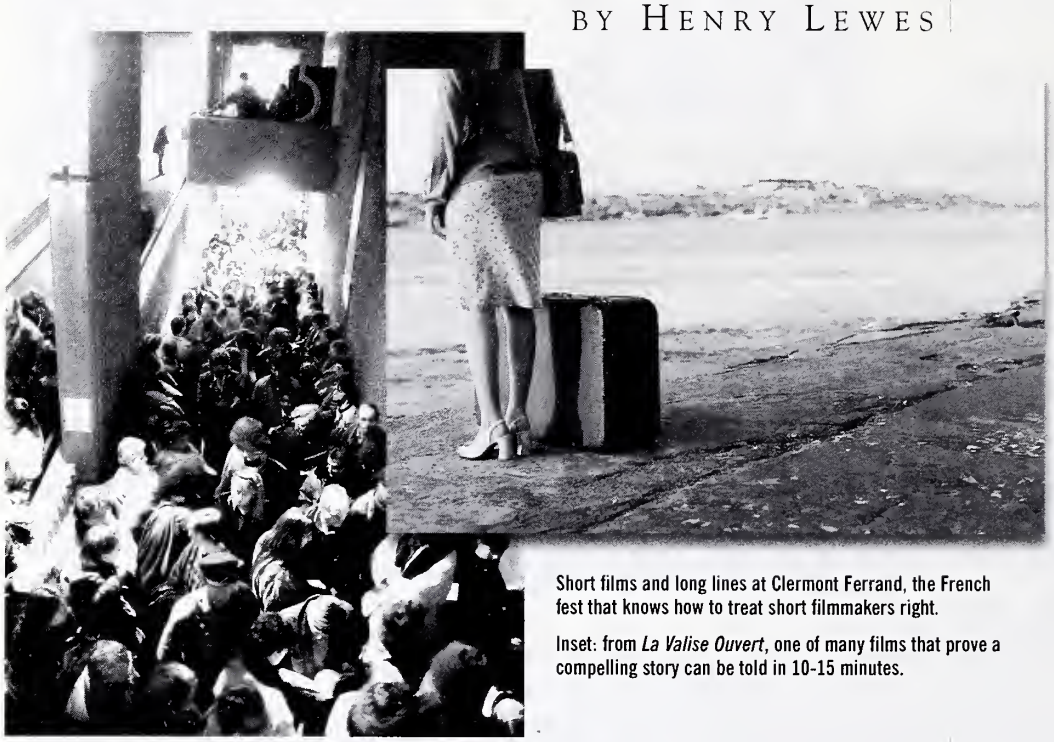
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SHORT CIRCUIT

The Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival

BY HENRY LEWES



Short films and long lines at Clermont Ferrand, the French fest that knows how to treat short filmmakers right.

Inset: from *La Valise Ouvert*, one of many films that prove a compelling story can be told in 10-15 minutes.

EVERY FEBRUARY, THE FRENCH TOWN OF Clermont-Ferrand becomes one of the most exciting and welcoming places in the world for makers of short films. This year the week-long Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival showcased nearly 400 shorts from 45 countries in eight theaters. Although highly selective, no other festival in Europe is more open to newcomers, a factor emphasized by the fact that three American universities presented programs.

The only requirement for submitting a film is a running time of less than 40 minutes, and it was demonstrated again and again that dramatic and fulfilling short stories can be told in 10 to 15 minutes. From Spain came *La Valise Ouvert*, where a prostitute falls in love with a client, who becomes her sole customer; to survive, she takes to stealing luggage from bus passengers, with moving results. From Ireland came *In Loving Memory*, in which an old lady at a wake wraps a tape around her dead husband's wrists which threads above the ground, so after his burial she can visit his grave and still feel in touch. From Canada came *Soul Cages*, where a young man employed in a photo-processing shop pursues a woman customer whom he believes is capturing people's souls by photographing them.

A number of films from the U.S. made it into competition, including Jonah Kaplan's *Stalker Guild Syndrome*, which observes Marc, a neurotic New Yorker who is unable to stop pursuing a woman through the streets. Kaplan's film exemplifies good short story form in several ways: The anxious voiceover allows us to share Marc's inmost private thoughts; the camera movements forcefully suggest his growing panic; and there is an ever-present sense of foreboding about how it will all end. At 11 minutes, it's just the right length.

Also in competition were Henry Griffin's *Mutiny*, about five jazz musicians on tour who spend too many hours confined in their van and grow to hate each other; Jodi Gibson's *Friday*, which concerns a pivotal day in the life of a woman in remission from breast cancer; and Paul Bonner's nightmarish *Bottomless Cup*, in which a young man is forced to remain in a diner until he has finished his coffee. The sinister old waitress, who constantly tops up his cup just before he can empty it, is brilliantly played. Like *Stalker*, *Bottomless Cup* carries a sense of conviction, suggesting that its maker is transferring to the screen real-life experience imaginatively transmuted.

The importance of student participation was emphasized to me by Sandrine Faucher Cassidy, whose job is to obtain distribution for films produced by the School of Cinema & Television of the University of Southern California. At Clermont-Ferrand, she does this by having endless meetings with buyers and producers and showing student films in a theater specially set aside for invited audiences. Selling, she admits, is not easy, but festival screenings quite often result in a film getting into other festivals. Over time, a novice filmmaker can build up a CV of festival showings. By giving a film increased publicity, these can eventually result in a sale. Cassidy is exceptional in being knowledgeable both about the French and U.S. markets, where as a full-time promoter for USC she attends many festivals. Columbia and New York Universities also put on excellently varied programs but were dependent on student coordinators, who must, perforce, make up with enthusiasm for their more limited knowledge of the markets.

An important aspect of Clermont-Ferrand is the film market, where visitors can meet and chat informally with buyers and sellers. There were about 30 stands, with representatives from countries as far apart as Scandinavia, Africa, Iran, New Zealand, Israel, and Canada. Much can be learned by discovering how filmmakers from other cultures go about their business. At the same time, one can identify those few organizations interested in buying, as opposed to purely promotion. They included the Seattle-based Atom Films, pursuing distribution via the Internet, but also purchasing for in-flight entertainment and shopping malls. They're even considering the idea of short films being installed beside office drinking fountains. Joel Bachar of Blackchair Productions has established a worldwide network of independent 'microcinemas'. It began, he explained, with his wanting to get his own films seen when he moved to Seattle in the mid-nineties. Since none of the conventional outlets were helpful, he took a back room in a cafe and presented shows once a month, for a $3 entry fee. Now he curates programs and distributes them to 20

states and just as many countries, including Sweden, Thailand, Australia, and Canada. With all this activity, Blackchair has a considerable and ongoing appetite for shorts and can provide makers with a small but worldwide audience.

The most practical way to meet the right people at Clermont-Ferrand is to contact the friendly MEDIA organization at the festival (part of the EC-sponsored audio-visual program), which arranges introductions with possible co-producers and sets up meetings. The popularity of the service was evidenced by the meeting area, where 20 or so pairs of figures were seated at low tables, engaged in deep discussion. This MEDIA service is open to U.S. filmmakers, but approaches should be made well in advance, as buyers tend to arrive with their appointment diaries already full. However, if you have to look for people you've not met before, the festival makes this easy, photographing everyone on arrival and posting these portraits under appropriate headings, such as Producers, Distributors, and Festival Organizers. MEDIA also arranges seminars open to all, where commissioning editors, such as those from the UK's Channel Four, explain what they are looking for.

It is also possible to place a video of a completed film in the Sales Library, where it can be viewed on any of 25 monitors, which were almost always fully occupied by prospective buyers. If you do this, you do not need to be present at the festival, thought it certainly increases your chances of some action. As does a mobile phone.

Another useful meeting ground was at the morning debates, where films shown the previous day were discussed with their directors (with English translations). Here one could learn of many ingenious ways in which money was raised and how successful films had been completed on tiny budgets. In the case of Christos Dimas, who made *Amerikanos*, about a Greek immigrant to San Francisco, this was done by working nine hours a day, six days a week, in a pizza parlor.

But perhaps the most delightful meeting spot is the Brasserie Gergovia, next door to the festival headquarters. It is crammed full until well after midnight, with festival-goers all wanting to make their point about the films they'd just seen. It is also just the place for cornering that elusive buyer.

Henry Lewes is a film journalist who has reported on festivals for such publications as Cineaste, Filmmaker, International Documentary Magazine, *and many international film magazines.*

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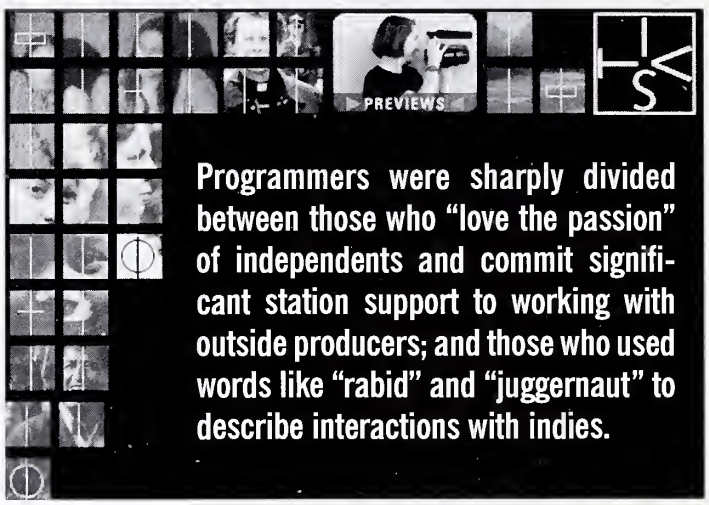
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The State of the (PVT) Nation

A Report from the ITVS Public Television Programmers Focus Groups

BY PAM CALVERT



LAST SUMMER, ITVS CONVENED focus groups of public television programmers in San Francisco, Chicago, Hartford, and Columbia, South Carolina—sites chosen to reflect distinctive regional issues. Thirty-seven programmers representing stations in 30 states participated; we hope to include every programmer in the system in these small-group discussions within the next three years.

At *The Independent*'s invitation, we are here sharing some of what we learned from these focus groups. Some of the responses might confirm your worst suspicions; others may surprise or inspire you.

Are there limits to the kinds of programming that you can air? What are they?

Programmers mark the controversial broadcast of the controversial 1994 broadcast of *Tales of the City*, Armistead Maupin's freewheeling portrait of 1970s San Francisco, as a major turning point for public television, with funding cuts and conservative backlash causing stations to become more cautious. It was considered a realistic response to political pressure: "The nervousness and chill starts at the top and filters down to the stations." More than one programmer noted that "even *P.O.V.* has mellowed out. There are no more gut-wrenching Wednesday mornings [following *P.O.V.* broadcasts]." This was by no means seen as a positive development; there is a sense that the PBS national schedule has become "bland" and "irrelevant," with an over-emphasis on "balance" resulting in "pabulum."

Programmers from all parts of the country spoke of internal pressures to increase annual "numbers"—audience ratings, membership, and underwriting income—and how that affected their decisions about whether they can literally afford to take risks. The growth of "enhanced underwriting" was singled out as leading public television programming in more a commercial and conservative direction.

Across the country, stations mentioned profanity and nudity as common concerns. There were some interesting gradations in whether foul language was scripted versus unscripted, whether the naked bodies were male or female, and whether the accents were American or British (there is the general sense that "you can do anything with a British accent," although most acknowledged that Masterpiece Theater's *Moll Flanders* pushed even that envelope).

Outside the Northeast, the sensitivities of religious conservatives have come to play a large role in many stations' programming decisions, particularly regarding abortion and homosexuality. Programmers note that they are getting calls of complaint now about programs they showed without incident 15 or 20 years ago, like *Monty Python*. Repeatedly, they noted the large number of calls generated from organized campaigns against lightning-rod shows such as *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School*, while they run the relatively lower-profile gay and lesbian newsmagazine series *In the Life* or even *P.O.V.* for season after season with few if any complaints—proving that the calls are coming from non-viewers.

Programmers acknowledge that viewer complaints are an inevitable part of their job. Most expressed the strong sense that PTV should deal with controversial issues and welcome the heat when a show is worth it. One programmer said that many of the most controversial shows epitomize the station at its best, but cause him personal dread because of the response he has to anticipate from reactionary elements in the community, which he finds demoralizing. This was echoed by other programmers, who said there were "just so many" hot-button shows a station could take on, due to the wear and tear on staff.

Programmers had varying opinions about running edited versions, with some refusing to air any edited shows at all because the edits were "poorly done," while others required edited versions if they were to be able to air a show at all. Stations do not edit locally, due to lack of resources or staff time, or in one case because if the community were to find out the station could edit shows, "the demand would never end—I've gotten a complaint about a 'darn' in *Sesame Street*."

What kinds of programming do you want but never find in the PTV system?

Several themes arose in this discussion. In the Midwest and South, more than one programmer asked about productions with a "strong conservative voice" and whether it was possible to find "moderate" conservative independent filmmakers producing "airable" work. Programmers in these regions strongly felt that the vast majority of shows in the pipeline were urban in focus and of little or no interest to their rural communities, for whom even *Sesame Street* is a "big city program."

A common theme throughout the country was foreign-born minority populations moving into communities that had been virtually all white or had a long-term balance of African-American and white, and the challenges these changes posed. Some programmers said that these changes pose opportunities to "take a wider look" at their schedules, developing new audiences for non-mainstream programming. All stressed the importance of programming that would interpret diverse cultures and changing national demographics to 'traditional' PTV audiences. Several programmers, from the Plains to the Atlantic Coast, spoke of the profound ignorance of the white American population and the need for programs directed to

GRAPHIC COURTESY ITVS

white people about diverse cultural communities.

We specifically asked about show length, since so many of ITVS's applicants and producers would prefer to work in feature format. All things being equal, programmers across the board concurred that they preferred a 60-minute length. One programmer said that "a 90-minute will sit on the shelf unless you provide a 30-minute to fill out the schedule," while another agreed, saying he schedules 90-minute programs on a "throwaway night," where he expects no audience. On the other hand, 30-minute shows were very popular as filler: "We could use more of those."

Long-form "big footprint" limited series with national publicity such as *The Farmer's Wife* or *An American Love Story* elicited mixed responses. One programmer spoke for many when he said, "My first question is, 'Is it good?' If it's five nights and 10 hours, it had better be better than *The Civil War*."

What is the most exciting thing you've aired in the past year, the one that you felt epitomized your station at its best?

Of all questions, this generated the greatest unity of response. Twenty-one of the 37 programmers cited a production which the station had produced in-house on a subject of local relevance. Local shows are top performers in pledge drives and sweeps, confirming that they are not only central to public television's mission but develop and retain viewer loyalty and revenue. More than one programmer stressed their sense that local service distinguishes public television from all other broadcasters: "Locally produced programming is our reason for being."

Do you want to see more drama programming coming through the system?

Widening the scope of drama programming available to PTV is seen as very problematic by programmers, for a variety of reasons. It was widely acknowledged that drama is not a strong suit for PBS, and the past record is marked by "dismal failures." There was general agreement that *Masterpiece Theater* set the bar high for production values, and that any other drama programming on PTV could therefore not be of "lower quality." However, many programmers felt there was room in the schedule for high-quality American-made work on a variety of topics.

Audience numbers for drama on PTV are often disappointing: viewers bring high expectations driven by the commercial industry, which offers star power and impossibly expen-

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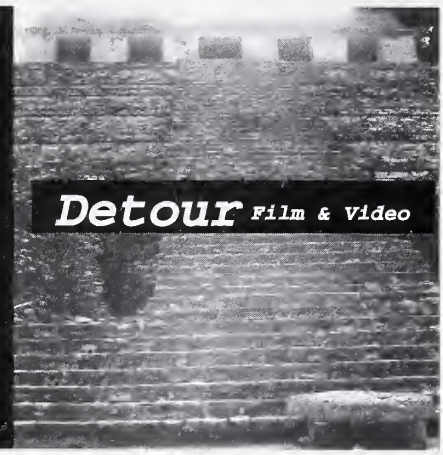
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sive production values. In this regard, programmers agreed that a theatrical run helped garner audiences for a PTV release. Scheduling drama was seen as especially problematic, because the pipeline supply is so unpredictable that it is impossible to give it a regular slot in the grid. As one programmer pointed out, "There is room for independent vision, but not a bunch of isolated one-offs. I have no idea how I'll use them, where I'll feed them to get any audience."

Several programmers spoke of the profound ignorance of the white American population and the need for programs directed to white people about diverse cultural communities.

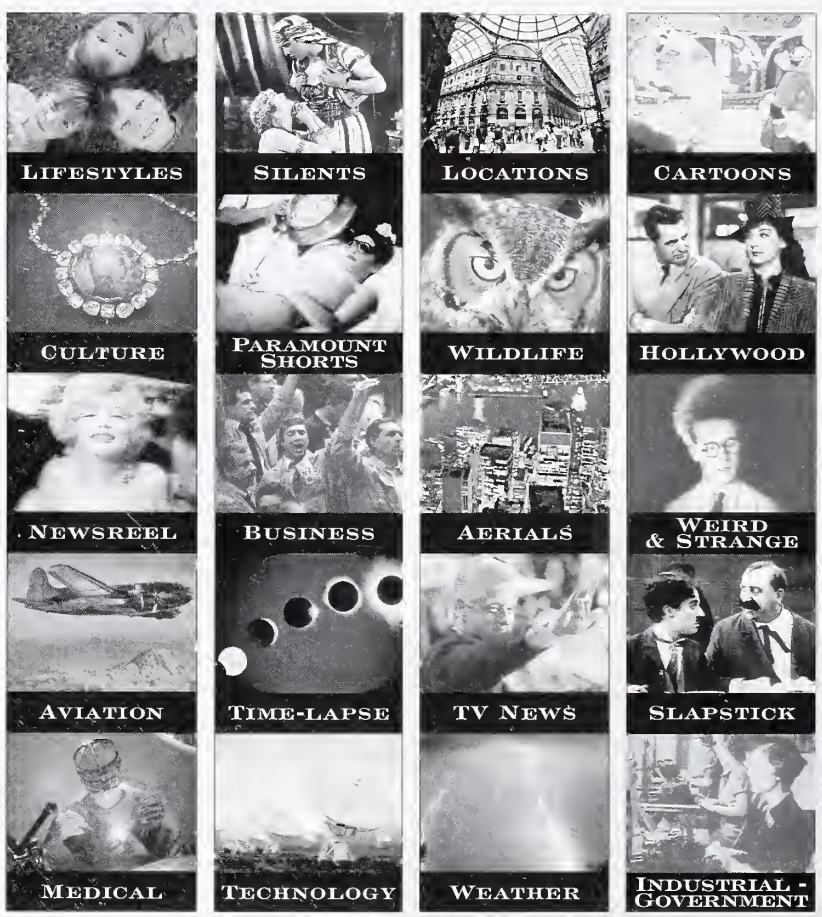
What do you think about independent producers?

In terms of programming independent work, it was felt that there was no audience for independent work as such and no particular viewer loyalty to series such as *Independent Lens*, so shows were promoted (and often scheduled) title by title, based on subject matter. Many stations do have a regular slot in the schedule for independent work, although for one station it's a "throwaway slot on a weak night—if any *POV* show even gets a 1 rating, I break out the champagne. I will run *Independent Lens* and I will die; there's no audience."

Programmers were sharply divided between those who "love the passion" of independents and commit significant station support to working with outside producers, and those who used words like "rabid" and "juggernaut" to describe interactions with indies. In the Midwest, programmers were particularly interested in ITVS facilitating opportunities for more in-depth interactions with producers, which are not as easy for them as they are for programmers on the coasts. Programmers in that focus group became quite enthusiastic at the prospect of attending gatherings of indie producers, bringing established independents in to do extended residencies at stations with staff producers, and combining the "creativity" of independents with the "reality check" of the PTV staff. They consider ITVS to be in a "critical position to facilitate that conversation like no other agency . . . in the perfect position to be extremely valuable to the system."

Pamela Calvert (Pamela_Calvert@itvs.pbs.org), now stations relations and outreach manager at ITVS (www.itvs.org), is the former director of programs and services at AIVF

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Right On, Mann!

A child of the Sixties, documentarian Ron Mann continues his luvin' portraits of the counterculture.

BY PAUL POWER



WHEN I REACHED **RON MANN** at his Toronto office last March for this interview, he admitted he wasn't feeling his best. The 41-year old filmmaker had eaten something dodgy from the fridge the night before—and he had "a pot hangover." After nearly 20 years of documentary filmmaking, Mann is still living by the principles that drive him to make his films: an allegiance to the counterculture, an interest in challenging current mores and theories, and a desire to chronicle other sides of life that would otherwise remain as untold stories. Mann captured underground jazz and poetry movements in his first two films *Imagine the Sound* (1981) and *Poetry in Motion* (1985), tapped the comic/graphic novel zeitgeist with *Comic Book Confidential* in 1988, while in 1992's *Twist* took a delightful look at the history of dance crazes that reshaped patterns for socializing in the '60s. And now comes *Grass*. Shown to great acclaim in Berlin, South by South West, and the Dallas Video Fest, *Grass* uses the crusade of the first commissioner of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the rabid Harry J. Anslinger, to construct an examination of the ineptitude and hypocrisy of U.S. anti-marijuana legislation. The official line is counterpointed by hilarious archival footage, startling facts and figures, and the playful graphics of Maury Whyte and Paul Mavrides. With *Grass*'s theatrical release this month through Unapix, Mann is poised to have his widest—and possibly most incendiary—success with what he terms his "feds versus heads" film.

You've been making documentaries for nearly 20 years now. Who were your main influences when you were starting off with *Imagine the Sound* in 1981?

I am influenced by the political documentary-maker Emile De Antonio, who made *Point of Order*, *In the Year of the Pig*, and *Millhouse*. [These documentaries address the Army-McCarthy hearings (1964), the Vietnam War (1969), and Nixon (1971), respectively—*Ed.*] I used to see De's films at a repertory theater in Toronto called The Roxy, and that was my real introduction to documentary film. De introduced me to gambling and drinking—all the things necessary to become a good filmmaker [*laughs*]. He was a Marxist who played the stock market, he was full of contradictions, but he was passionate about documentary filmmaking. De was someone who inspired me—I met him in New York in 1980 when I was really young, and he became my mentor. He taught me everything.

It's curious that almost all of your films have a distinctly U.S. perspective, although you're Canadian, and you live and work there. Does it make a difference to the way you work, the fact that the focus of a lot of your films is set south of the border?

Well, it's North American culture. I grew up reading the books of Jack Kerouac and the poetry of Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs and listened to the jazz of Charlie Mingus and Archie Shepp. I'm very much of the North American experience. For me, it's about alternative culture; it's not about Canadian culture, it's counterculture. I grew up in the sixties and seventies, and that was what was alive and spoke to me, and what now reflects my experiences. Canadians like to be critical of the U.S. government and *Grass* is very critical.

I'm very much a Canadian filmmaker though. I did do a few films that are strictly Canadian—my last documentary was called *Dream Tower*. It was on Rochdale College, Toronto, and looked at free school education in the sixties and also the counterculture in Canada. And the impulse for that was to do a film that was in my own backyard.

What's the methodology behind your choice of topics and interview subjects?

Originally a lot of this had a lot to do with meeting my heroes—musicians, poets, cartoonists—making films about them, wanting to document these artists so there would be some record of how important they were. So the greatest moment for me is filming an interview with someone like John Cage or Frank Zappa. I get to meet my heroes, a kind of who's who of alternative culture. I actually like what I'm doing—maybe it's elitist—but I really feel compelled to make films not just for me, because I know there are people out there just like myself who want to see these kinds of movies; it's just that no one's doing them.

***Comic Book Confidential* captured that late eighties era in the world of comic books and graphic novels, which was an amazing phenomenon that peaked about the time of your film's release. Do you harbor any hopes that *Grass* was made at a watershed period in the campaign to legalize marijuana?**

Well, let's hope; it's made in an election year. We showed it to Keith Stroup, who's the founder of NORML [National Association for the Reform of Marijuana Laws], and he said, "Every American should see this movie." I knew when I read that, that it was worth the three years making this movie. And I just came back from Austin, where 1,400 people gave me a standing ovation on the opening night of SXSW. I always describe *Grass* as a disaster movie with a cast of 60 million people! [*laughs*] There are 60 million pot smokers out there, so there's definitely an audience for this movie.

So what's your prime concern as a filmmaker, then—is it truth, or entertainment, or some other overriding theme?

Well, De used irony a lot, making political points through humor, and that definitely is where I've been influenced by him: in the juxtaposi-

REEFER NOIR: from Louis J. Gasnier's finger-wagging *Reefer Madness*

"There are 60 million pot smokers out there, so there's definitely an audience for this movie."



Public Pot Enemy No. 1: Harry J. Anslinger, first commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Treasury Bureau, who started the U.S. government's crusade against pot in the mid-1930s and pressed for a Uniform Narcotic Act.



New York, New York's a heck of a town: Mayor Fiorella La Guardia was one of the few public figures to speak out against the draconian legislation and excessive spending of the anti-pot campaigners.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SPHINX PRODUCTIONS

tion of music, political commentary, and satire. So between Emile De Antonio and *MAD* magazine, they're my influences. Beyond that, I've felt a responsibility to document who we are, not just for this generation but for future generations. Chronicling the sixties has been one of the projects that I've been committed to.

There's more to it than your being a product of the sixties, though. Isn't it because there's a huge subculture from that era that's been neglected on film?

[The '60s has] been neglected, but it's also being dismantled—part of some sort of right-wing attack on any kind of progressive politics or cultural expression. It's just been totally dismissed. I believe that the dominant paradigm has to be subverted. [*laughs*]

The dominant paradigm in your field of work being the networks and Hollywood?

In the case of *Grass*, you've pretty much got a kind of brainwashing going on. You've got this drug bureaucracy of $7 billion a year and 600,000 people being arrested a year, but somehow there's a feeling that we need this kind of protection—and that's false. What De made me aware of was that if you lie and keep lying, people eventually believe the lie. So it's really just getting beyond [the lie]; it's taking images that were used, for example, to promote an anti-marijuana message and re-energizing them with a completely different meaning.



As a corollary to that, does one need repeatedly to hammer home the truth for people to believe that as well?

Yes. I mean I'm putting out my own disinformation. I believe documentary is agit-prop. I completely am opposed to this idea of objectivity; I'm not a TV journalist. I really am putting out my own propaganda.

So how do you feel about cinema verité?

Oh, I completely hate it! It's just a false notion that you can have objectivity. In most cases with TV, it's all about maintaining the status quo. And today people are so savvy to cameras that they act out in front of them, so the idea of 'the fly on the wall' or being a passive observer is quite insane. It's the editor who's making these decisions of what you want to see, quite frankly, and it's the TV station that's allowing you to see what you're seeing.

Since subversion is your *modus operandi*, have you found this limits the number of distribution or exhibition options available to you?

Well, *Grass*, for example, is the first film on marijuana prohibition, and the reason there haven't been other films like this is because TV, which funds most documentaries, won't fund this kind. There's a progressive Canadian TV station, CityTV, and they were the ones that helped me with this movie; otherwise, it wouldn't have gotten made.

I believe that the budget for *Grass* was a not inconsiderable $1.5 million . . .

. . . Canadian, which is about U.S. $1 million. A lot of people worked below the poverty line on this movie. Like Paul Mavrides, the co-writer—who drew an underground hippie-stoner comic strip, 'The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers,' in the sixties—and who basically did the film's graphics work for nothing. People like Woody Harrelson, the narrator on *Grass*, donated his time for free; Yoko Ono donated the John Lennon piece to the stock footage; and even Bob Dylan's company reduced their price of the music publishing. So a lot of people came together. But there were a lot of people that didn't. Herb Alpert's company told me that I would burn in Hell if I tried to use "Tijuana Taxi."

If we dig beneath the surface of your films, particularly *Grass*, there's a decep-



Clean-cut student pot activists were a major catalyst in bringing marijuana into the mainstream;
below: "Smoke one of mine": a pot practitioner.

"People like Woody Harrelson, the narrator on *Grass*, donated his time for free; Yoko Ono donated the John Lennon piece to the stock footage; and even Bob Dylan's company reduced their price of the music publishing . . . [but] Herb Alpert's company told me that I would burn in Hell if I tried to use 'Tijuana Taxi.' "



tively extensive amount of research involved. Is it getting more difficult to gain access to original materials? And are there more layers of revisionism to sort through, the longer we get away from the original events?

A lot of people don't fact-check, so a lot of my work is just fact-checking. But it takes time, because with this kind of movie, where there are so many pieces, it's like a jigsaw puzzle: the story or picture remains the same, but the pieces



EVERYBODY CAN DO THE TWIST: Giveaways for Mann's 1992 "instructional dance film" *Twist*.

Joey Dee, one of the pioneers of the new dance craze.

would keep changing. For instance, editor Robert Kennedy and I would be editing a sequence and suddenly we couldn't use "The Joker" by Steve Miller, because he's a born-again Christian, or we couldn't use "Grazing in the Grass," our second choice, because it's an ad for *Antz* and they don't want to be associated with a film about marijuana at the same time as they're selling a Hollywood movie. So we had to re-edit the third time with yet another song. It goes on and on and on like this for three or four years.

In the nineties you had a twin reputation as a filmmaker in the documentary tradition while becoming an expert in the cutting edge of new technology. How did this affect your work?

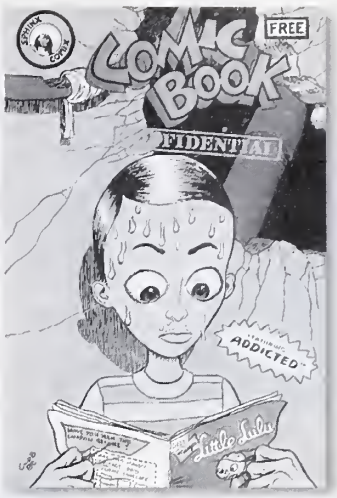
I became a multimedia guru from '91 to '95, until basically the web took over. I would help companies establish CD-ROM titles and, later on, web sites and was hired out and did lectures and talks about it. The thing we learned, though, was that the technology doesn't stop, and that's really one of the reasons why I stopped doing it, because I couldn't keep up with it.

I understand that your production company, Sphinx Productions, makes films directly for CD-ROM.

Yeah, I was one of the first people to digitize a movie, which was in 1991. I worked with Bob Stein of the Voyager company [from 1982]. I helped package the first Criterion discs—which were *King Kong* and *Citizen Kane*—in his living room, and one of the first discs for the Voyager company was *Poetry in Motion*. It became the first to be used as a hybrid between the laser disc and the computer. Bob chose *Poetry in Motion* to be the first film to be digitized onto CD-ROM. And it inspired many, many programmers—it was a huge hit.

So your energies and focus were being devoted to new technological developments rather than creating the actual work itself?

Well, we [at Voyager] were at the forefront of CD-ROM and multimedia; we were the avant garde, we showed people what could be done. I [continued to pioneer new technology] because I thought I was empowered by this. I thought "if I can spend $30,000 instead of $1 million [by doing all the technological work in-house], I could do a lot more [directing]." Turns out that was kind of wrong—the market dropped off for educational titles such as mine. Where we would sell 50,000 discs, it went down to 5,000 over a matter of four years. And the other thing is that Voyager ran out of money and just stopped. In a way, that was it—the end—for me. I just felt that without a publisher I wasn't going to do any more. I guess the shock for me is that conversations I would have with [new media colleagues] that once seemed so obscure to the general public, I hear people on the bus discussing now. It's so amazing what's happened with technology in the last five years; it's kind of mind-blowing.



ADDICTIVE: Sphinx published a comic book to accompany the release of Mann's *Comic Book Confidential*.

But in a way it was all good, because I realized what I really should be doing was theatrical movies. Even though the Internet is communal, I just love people coming together in a theater, which is where I saw movies to begin with—in rep at the Roxy theater, 99 cents watching De Antonio movies and *Reefer Madness* double bills. [*laughs*] Now of course it's on Bravo and pay-TV: they're the new repertory houses.

How do you find the day-to-day economics of operating as a filmmaker?

You've got to keep your day job. It's really just a huge struggle to keep doing what I'm doing. I'm very aware that I need to be honest with and pay the people I work with. A lot of documentary filmmakers say, "Oh, we're going to pick up a digital camera, we're going to make our film for $20,000." Well, you still have to pay people: There's only so many films that can be done on favors. I'm really concerned about the fact that a lot of these filmmakers are going to exploit their crews. My films are expensive, but I feel good about it because I eventually pay my crew, even if I defer. I also produce other peoples' films. Last year I executive-produced [Jim Shedden's] *Brakhage*, so I try to encourage young filmmakers.

I do have a very socialist way of making movies, which is that the key creative people own the movie and share in the profits. In *Grass*, if the film makes money, we're going to give money to political organizations that will help people. We're going to use the film for fundraising and benefits, for example, to put money back into helping the decriminalization movement. I don't think I've gone into filmmaking in any way to make money—I did it for fame! [*laughs*] No, I thought they were films that made a difference; that's what it is. I'm proud of that—money became irrelevant. People would ask how much it cost—what does it matter? It matters that there are films that are just about ideas. This film is very different, because most of the films I do, I do for the love of it. But De said there are two reasons why you make movies: one is you really love something and you want to turn people onto that. The other is that you really hate something. These are the two basic emotions that guide you. In the case of *Grass*, I really hated what was a very destructive and wasteful drug policy. So that's what inspires me to make movies—those basic emotions.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent



UNDERGROUND CINEMA

MARC SINGER TALKS ABOUT THE MAKING OF DARK DAYS AND HIS REMARKABLE FILMMAKING JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF DARKNESS

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

ALMOST EVERY FILMMAKER HAS GONE THROUGH EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES TO SEE THEIR PROJECTS THROUGH, AND THAT USUALLY GOES DOUBLE FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS. Borrowing money from friends and family, asking outrageous favors, subjecting themselves to difficult, and in some cases, dangerous situations, all for the love of a film that may never even make it to a screen. Everyone has his or her own story of hardship. But 26-year-old first-time director Marc Singer may have set a new standard for personal sacrifice. During the six-year period in which he made *Dark Days*, Singer sank to the bottom—all the way to the bottom—where he joined the ranks of the lowest of the low, sometimes referred to pejoratively as "the mole people." They are a class of people even the homeless on the streets of New York fear and disdain. People who have abandoned life on the surface and retreated into the miles of train and subway tunnels that run far below the streets of Manhattan, swarming with rats and entombed in total darkness. At first, the tunnel people were the subjects of his documentary, as well as his film crew and his friends. Eventually, however, they became his family and his partners in survival.

"I really ended up being in the shit without intending to be," recalls Singer, now sitting in a Polish diner in the East Village over a $2 plate of eggs and bacon. We're not far from where his whole story began six years ago, when a homeless man on Avenue A first told him about the tunnel people. By the time he finished his documentary, Singer had lost his apartment and furnishings, took up residence in the tunnel, and adopted a homeless way of life. "I finally ended up going through the garbage to eat because I had to. I mean, it was really rough. I was depressed and suicidal, having to carry all this film all over town with me. The only reason I didn't check out was because I didn't trust anyone else to finish the damn film. That might sound comical now. But at the time, it wasn't so funny. Even the tunnel people had almost all gotten out of the tunnel—they were moving on, and I was still at the soup kitchens, having to sit through sermons before I could get a meal. During the editing I literally lost everything. [The people in the tunnel] would laugh at me and say, 'Look at you now! You went from taxi cabs and sushi to the subway and McDonald's, to looking through the garbage.' "

Singer looks reasonably well-fed these days, albeit still a little scruffy, and he now has three major Sundance Film Festival awards to put on his mantle: Audience Award, Freedom of Expression Award, and Cinematography Award. Not bad for a guy who had never picked up a camera before, and who says he never had any intention of being a filmmaker (and still isn't quite sure if he is one). A guy who claims he had no idea whatsoever what he was doing during the filming. But that's just one of the many small miracles hidden in the making of *Dark Days*.

A powerful black-and-white 16mm film that follows the story of a community of people living in the Amtrak tunnels beneath Grand Central Station, *Dark Days* is at times shocking, but it will also make you laugh out loud and feel a strong sense of empathy, if not admiration, for the people in the tunnel as you learn their individual stories—who they are, how they came to be in the tunnels, what they have done to adapt and survive, and how happy they are, ultimately, to return to life above ground. It stands in stark contrast to the sense one gets reading the book *The Mole People*, written in the early '90s by Jennifer Toth, then an intern reporter at the *L.A. Times*' New York bureau. Toth ventured into the tunnels to write a series of articles, eventually producing a book that depicts a dark and frightening underworld, inhabited by thousands of homeless people, some of whom subsist on a diet of flame-roasted rats and have physically adapted to their subterranean environment with super-sensitive vision.

"I don't believe it," Singer says bluntly of many of Toth's descriptions. "For one, there's way too much food thrown out in this city every day for people to be eating rats. I think [*The Mole People*] did a lot more

PHOTO: RODOLPHE BARAS; OPPOSITE: COURTESY FILMMAKER

harm than good, because she makes everybody out to be like animals. They're not animals. In fact, I think *Dark Days* proves that they're very normal people who just happen to be homeless. I could've picked anyone down there to focus on, and it would've been the same outcome. It's true that there are people who don't come up [to the surface] that much—like in the tunnel that I was in, there were some people who would come up every couple of weeks—but that was really rare. Some people get to the point to where they're too embarrassed to come up. But [Toth] went for the obvious, and I think that was wrong."

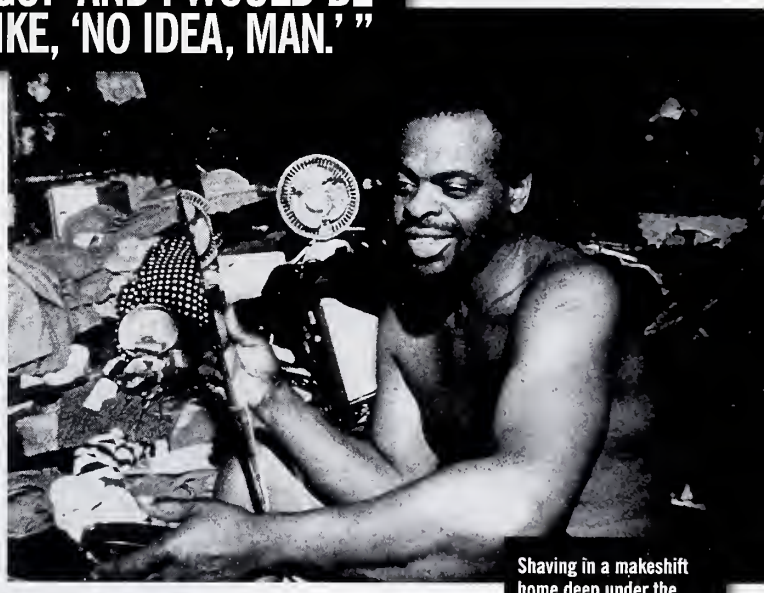
INDEED, JUST HOW ENTERPRISING AND WELL-SKILLED THE TUNNEL PEOPLE CAN BE, given the opportunity, is reflected by the fact that they served as Singer's crew for *Dark Days* and did a remarkable job with few resources and under harsh conditions. Singer first got the idea for *Dark Days* after venturing into the tunnels on a whim and discovering, much to his surprise, a group of highly civilized and extremely friendly people. These included Ralph, a young man who collected cans on the streets by day and slept in the small shanty town beneath Grand Central Station by night, where he had built a home out of scrap wood, complete with a fenced in "back yard" where he raised his dogs. It was Ralph who first suggested to Singer the idea of making a film. Singer had already promised himself to try to help his new friends get out of the tunnel, and figured a film would be just the way to do it. He convinced the others in the tunnel to go along with it and offered them a percentage of the profits if they would work as his crew, in the naïve hope that the money would be sufficient to get everybody out and back on their feet. He also saw it as a way to help them learn to work together as a group and set a goal for themselves beyond that of everyday survival. But what he never anticipated was how well it would all come out.

"Henry [one of the tunnel people featured in *Dark Days*] worked on the railroad for like 20 years, laying tracks," Singer says. "One day we were walking and I said 'Can you build me something that can run down that track smoothly and hold two people, camera, and lights?' Because I needed moving shots. He said sure. The next morning I get up and there's a little fire, and he had taken the wheels off a shopping cart, and big pieces of wood. He was heating up metal rods and burning holes through the wood because we didn't have a drill. And he built this fucking dolly. We went through three of them. The first one got burned down. The second one, someone turned it into his house, and I felt bad kicking him out. So then we had the third one, which was the dolly of dollies—man, this thing would just cruise! We laid 40 or 50 blocks worth of cable, so anywhere we were, we could just plug in the lights, and we were ready to go."

For lighting, Singer used hand-held flood lights and thousand watt plug-ins, mounted on crosses made of scrap wood. "I told the light tech, just point the lights always in front of me or to the side of what we're filming. That's the only advice I ever gave him." Not that Singer was in much of a position to give advice. He himself was a total neophyte. As he recalls, "The first week or so, loading the camera, I'd be calling up the camera house, and the guy was like 'Okay, I'm gonna talk you through this one more time.' But after that, Ralph learned to load film in the dark in two seconds. It was full crew, man! I'd say, 'Okay, we're gonna shoot this,' and by the time I'd get there, the lights, sound, everything was ready to go. They were so clever, because being homeless and living in the tunnel, they had to be creative in how to do stuff. If they wanted electricity, they had to find it and tap into it. So if we ever wanted to do something filming-wise that we didn't have the equipment to do, they'd come up with something. If I'd come in with a regular crew down there, they wouldn't have lasted one minute."

Singer rented his camera from a local camera store, where the sales clerk behind the counter was so impressed with what Singer intended to do that he essentially gave him a camera for two years for free—four cameras, in fact, says Singer, because they got so badly damaged in the tunnel. That was critical to the film, since Singer had not raised a penny of funding. He had slowly been selling off all his possessions to buy film stock, until he sold even his bed, then moved into the tunnel because he says it was more comfortable than a furniture-less room—and besides, he wouldn't have to pay rent anymore. Furthermore, he says, it was impossible to capture everything that was happening without being on location 24 hours a day. "I'd be asleep and someone would come wake me up and say 'Get up, man, this is happening, and we gotta film it.' "

"THE TUNNEL WAS REALLY COLD, AND IT WOULD FOG UP INSIDE THE EYE PIECE. EVERY TIME I FINISHED FILMING, SOMEONE WOULD SAY, 'HOW DID IT GO?' AND I WOULD BE LIKE, 'NO IDEA, MAN.' "



Shaving in a makeshift home deep under the streets of Manhattan, from *Dark Days*.

But even with no living expenses, Singer soon ran out of money to buy film and had to go begging to Kodak. Again, they were so taken by his dedication and his subject matter that they donated all the film stock he could use for free—all without seeing a single frame of the footage he had shot.

That was fortunate, since Singer himself wasn't even sure he had any usable footage. "When we first watched the film in the lab, we couldn't believe it came out," he admits. "I couldn't see what I was filming because the tunnel was really cold, and it would fog up inside the eye piece. For the first five or six seconds I could see what I was

filming, but after that it was a blur. Every time I finished filming, someone would say 'How did it go?" and I would be like 'No idea, man.' Even the light meter—I asked my roommate how to work it, and he said you just click it and match the numbers up to whatever it says. It was luck. My only thing was, you hold that camera as steady as you can. I'm not crazy about shaky film. But the rest was luck."

Perhaps for that reason, Singer says he feels somewhat uncomfortable about receiving a Cinematography award at Sundance, adding that he doesn't think awards should be given out for documentaries at all, particularly because so many other documentaries at Sundance this year were "socially conscious." "It's so much work to make a documentary," he says. "And every other one of those filmmakers had to go through the same shit as me. All of them struggled. All of them ran out of money. All of them didn't know what they were doing or if it was going to work. And everyone was scared during the making of their films."

WHATEVER IT WAS INSIDE OF SINGER THAT COMPELLED HIM TO ABANDON HEARTH AND HOME in order to make this documentary remains somewhat of a mystery, however. Even though he describes his feelings for the homeless in the tunnel with a clear passion, the true motivation behind what would make an affluent 20-year-old London expat who had been working in the fashion business live in utter filth and darkness for two solid years to save a few homeless people and crack addicts remains a bit murky. Singer says he has always taken great chances in his life and believes firmly in the idea of stepping off into the great unknown. He also claims he never felt more accepted by anyone than by the people he met in the tunnel. He became wrapped up in their lives, including those who never made it out, such as one man whom he pulled off the train tracks, stopping a suicide attempt, only to see him get killed a few days later by a train. In fact, if there is any criticism of *Dark Days*, it would have to be the film's aversion to the more severe and depressing aspects of tunnel life. Although the film does not avoid the issue altogether—some of the strongest footage is of a woman named Dee, who is addicted to crack and is nearly murdered when her house is intentionally burned down by someone with whom she had a dispute, as well as her wrenching, crack-induced monologue where she describes the death of her children—at times Singer paints a very rosy picture. The surreal rantings of one man describing his beloved, deceased pet bird, are hysterically reminiscent of old Cheech and Chong movies. What we don't see, however, is that at some point later on, **he** also wound up dead. Singer makes a tremendous effort to humanize his subjects and depict them in a civilized way, but in doing so, he minimizes the anguish and the living hell they are facing, despite the fact that they may have pirated electricity, makeshift toilets, and plywood homes full of junk furniture.

"Living in the tunnel I always thought was a lot better for you physically, but a lot worse for you mentally than living on the street," Singer says. "In the tunnel, you can get comfortable. And that's a totally psychological thing. When you first go down there, the place is a fucking dump. I don't think I captured it as horrible as it really is. You've got to tell yourself that you're doing the right thing by going down there. You've got to convince yourself that this is a good place to live. And after convincing yourself of that for a couple of years, you start believing that you should be there. Then after a few years, you start liking it. And when you like something, why leave it? You can really see that happen to people."

AFTER A YEAR OF NOT BEING ABLE TO WORK ON *DARK DAYS* BECAUSE HE had completely run out of money and favors, Singer met the producer for his film, Ben Freedman, through yet another strange twist of fate. At the time, Singer was still homeless, but frequently invited to dinner by an Australian couple he had met. The film had hit a brick wall from lack of financing, until Freedman offered to invest money towards its completion. Singer told Freedman he needed $10,000 to get things moving again. According to the director, Freedman then went directly to his bank and withdrew his whole life savings from his account and handed it over to Singer. Freedman also helped recruit other investors who were crucial in getting the film finished, although Singer remained adamant that no one would have any say about its creative direction, or even be able to see it until it was totally finished. The Sundance screening in January, he says, was the first time almost anyone had seen anything other than a half-hour rough cut, which he had used to recruit DJ Shadow to do the music. But the fact that the film got accepted into Sundance gave Singer and his investors a strong sense of hope – even though most of those involved in its making were rather unimpressed with the hoopla.

"When the film first got accepted, I told everyone in the tunnel, 'We got into Sundance!' And they were like, 'Hmm. Did you hear what happened to such and such?' The only person who sorta knew what Sundance was was Ralph, 'cause we'd dreamed about it. We'd sit around in the tunnel with the crew and say, 'Can you imagine if this happened?' Then after Sundance we got in the newspapers and on TV, so now they're starting to understand that [the film] could go somewhere. And they all have a percentage. I was overwhelmed by the reaction at Sundance. I knew the film was good, but you never know how people are gonna react."

The reactions have been almost totally positive, for the most part, from audiences to critics to distributors. As of press time, however, Singer still did not have a distributor lined up, although several companies have expressed interest. If need be, Singer says he will distribute the film himself.

And despite the film's early critical success, Singer says he isn't sure whether he plans to continue making films in the future. "All I've done for almost six years is this. I don't know anything else. I don't even know who I am. All I've lived and breathed is this film. So I need to find myself a little bit. Have some new experiences, see what interests me—and I need my own apartment!"

Ironically, a few days after this interview, Singer again found himself totally homeless, as did his producer, when the East Village apartment they were sharing burned to the ground.

Singer definitely has some strange karma, and it will be interesting, to say the least, to see what he does in the future. If he does continue to make films, Singer expects to stay on the documentary side, although he has entertained the idea of doing dramatic features. After the experience of making *Dark Days*, he says he's reluctant to jump straight into another film. Nonetheless, he eventually confesses that he already has another project brewing in his head—one that he says is bigger and more difficult to pull off than *Dark Days*, if that is indeed possible. "I can tell you that it would be about war," Singer says enigmatically. It's anyone's guess whether he plans to film one, start one, or stop one. But you can be certain that he's capable of all three.

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor at The Independent

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NEW VIDEO/DOCURAMA

BY LISSA GIBBS





126 Fifth Avenue, 15th fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 206-8600; fax: 206-9001; ccassaro@newvideo.com; www.newvideo.com; Contacts: Susan Margolin, COO & Co-founding Principal; Steve Savage, President & Co-founding Principal

What is New Video?
New Video is an entertainment, marketing, and sales company specializing in bringing documentaries, feature films, and classic television to home video and DVD. Our claim to fame is the A&E and History Channel home video lines. With these networks we have released over 2,000 videos, including *Monty Python's Flying Circus* and the original *Avengers* TV series. This past year we officially launched our Docurama label with D.A. Pennebaker's *Bob Dylan—Don't Look Back*, the acclaimed *The Brandon Teena Story* from Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir, as well as Barbara Sonneborn's moving *Regret to Inform*. The New Video home office is in New York City, with sales offices in Chicago and Arizona.

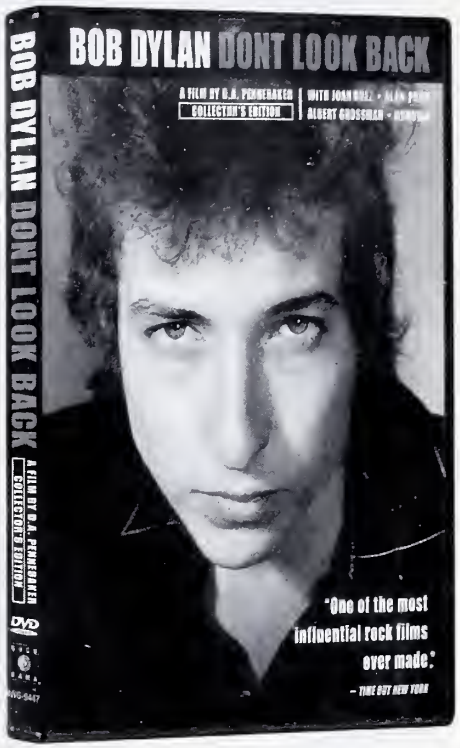
Who is New Video?
All 35 of us are key, but our executive roster is as follows: Susan Margolin; Steve Savage; Aimee Connolly, Vice President & General Manager; Trudi Roth, Vice President, Marketing; Mark Kashden, Vice President, Business Development; Gene Fink, Vice President, Sales; and Caitlan Cassaro, Docurama Marketing Manager.

How, when, and why did Docurama come into being?
When we starting putting out videos in 1990 we had a lot to learn. The one thing we knew was never to use the commercially challenged word "documentary." Fast forward 10 years: we saw the world finally catching up to all of these wonderful films, yet there wasn't a home video and DVD label dedicated exclusively to docs. And so, Docurama was born.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind New Video/Docurama:
Docurama—Everything else is pure fiction.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY NEW VIDEO



What would people be most surprised to learn about New Video or its founders and/or key staff?
Steve Savage ran that legendary chain of Manhattan video stores of the same name in the '80s. Anybody who still owes late fees can remit them to the address above. No questions asked.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Bob Dylan—Don't Look Back and Stephen Sondheim's Original Cast Album for *Company!* (D.A. Pennebaker); *Moon Over Broadway* (D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus); *The Brandon Teena Story* (Greta Olafsdottir and Susan Muska); *Paul Taylor—Dancemaker* (Matthew Diamond); *Regret to Inform* (Barbara Sonneborn); *An American Love Story* (Jennifer Fox); *Genghis Blues* (Roko and Adrian Belic); *The Awful Truth* (Michael Moore); and *The McCourts of Limerick* (Conor McCourt).

What types of works do you distribute?
New Video acquisitions reflect our ambition to put together a library of the greatest documentaries and independent programming past, present, and future. With A&E and the History Channel we have TV docs cov-

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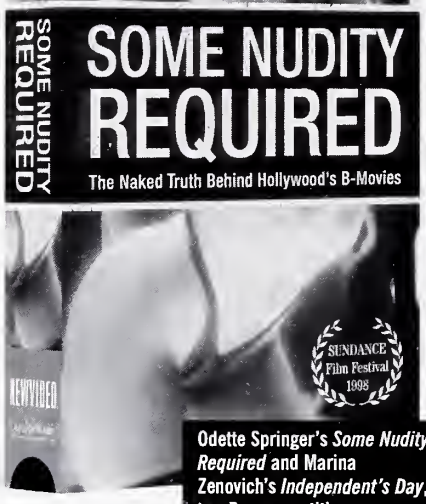
Distributing outstanding documentaries, restored classic films, children's and instructional programs for worldwide broadcast since 1980.





Send VHS submissions to Brian Gilbert, Director of Acquisitions





Odette Springer's *Some Nudity Required* and Marina Zenovich's *Independent's Day*, two Docurama titles.

ered. With Docurama we look for documentaries that have a theatrical scale—strong stories, compelling subjects and characters that we want to get to know.

What drives you to acquire the titles you do?

We have acquired films that we knew would be tough but we wanted them for our library. Our role within the community is to find audiences and return money to our filmmakers and, of course, to New Video. When we break through and find that audience, it's a great feeling. We're making a difference.

Do documentaries present special distribution issues?

Not issues as much as challenges. Many video stores still don't have documentary sections. There are buyers for many big chains who personally love docs but are hesitant to bring them in. We do have success stories such as Blockbuster bringing *The Brandon Teena Story* into all of their stores. Publicity is key, and setting up in-store appearances and online chats go a long way towards helping the film find its audience.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?

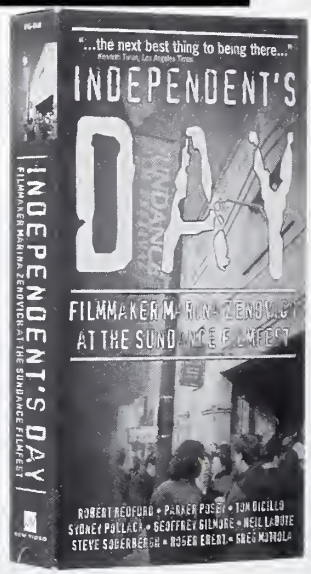
Tell our customers about it, show it to our customers, tell our customers about it again, tell everyone else about it, tell our customers about it again and then pray.

Where do New Video titles generally show?

Our titles are generally shown at festivals, video stores, music stores, mass merchants, online retailers, schools and libraries. The general viewing age ranges from 18 to 104 and our titles are primarily present in North America, but also in Japan, Europe, and Australia.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?

We find our titles primarily through festivals, word-of-mouth, direct submissions, and we do look at works-in-progress. We have found some of our documentaries at such festivals as Sundance, Toronto, Docfest, and DoubleTake, for example. A good place to start is with an e-mail to Caitlan Cassaro who marketing manager for Docurama [ccassaro@newvideo.com].



Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:

Big range. Michel Negroponte shot *Jupiter's Wife* for something like $500. Of course, postproduction took it up beyond that, but Digital Video and other such inventions are opening up the low budget doc big time. We've also distributed films that have had budgets of many millions of dollars.

Biggest change at New Video in recent years?

The Internet and DVD have almost reinvented our business. Making a commentary track with D.A. Pennebaker and Bob Neuwirth makes *Don't Look Back* totally accessible and exciting to new audiences. Also, the Web has opened up new opportunities for us, from both from access to new audiences and revenue streams. Everybody always thinks that the next medium is going to obliterate the incumbents, but this rarely happens. Most often it just realigns and redefines the existing media. We think this is what is happening to us now and so far it's been good. We are very excited about the future.

Where will New Video be 10 years from now?

As downstreaming, et al. becomes commonplace and

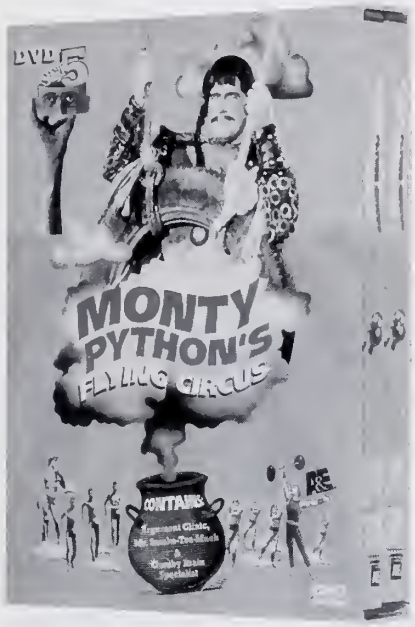
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people can get anything they want, they're going to need help finding what's good and worth their time no less **[THAN??]** their money. New Video has spent the last 20 years taking great films and presenting them in appealing ways. Finding the marketing hooks, the audiences, and the customers will become more important in this new world. We will probably still be putting things



in boxes (portable media) but most of our business will probably be in "virtual packaging" of great films.

You knew New Video had made it as a company when . . .
our local coffee shop finally allowed us to run a tab!

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Steve would open up a 21st century media deli (the kind of shops that will replace video stores once streaming takes hold). Having the ye olde New Video shops, seeing customers everyday was a grounding experience that we miss on the 15th floor. When we did something wrong our customers would tell us right then and there. Susan would be making a documentary film about distributing documentary films.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
finish the film you're working on. And then move on to the next, but don't abandon the distribution cycle. Our greatest successes happen when the filmmakers stay involved. They have the best ideas. They know their audience better than we do. Their work at publicity and online chats is invaluable in getting the job done.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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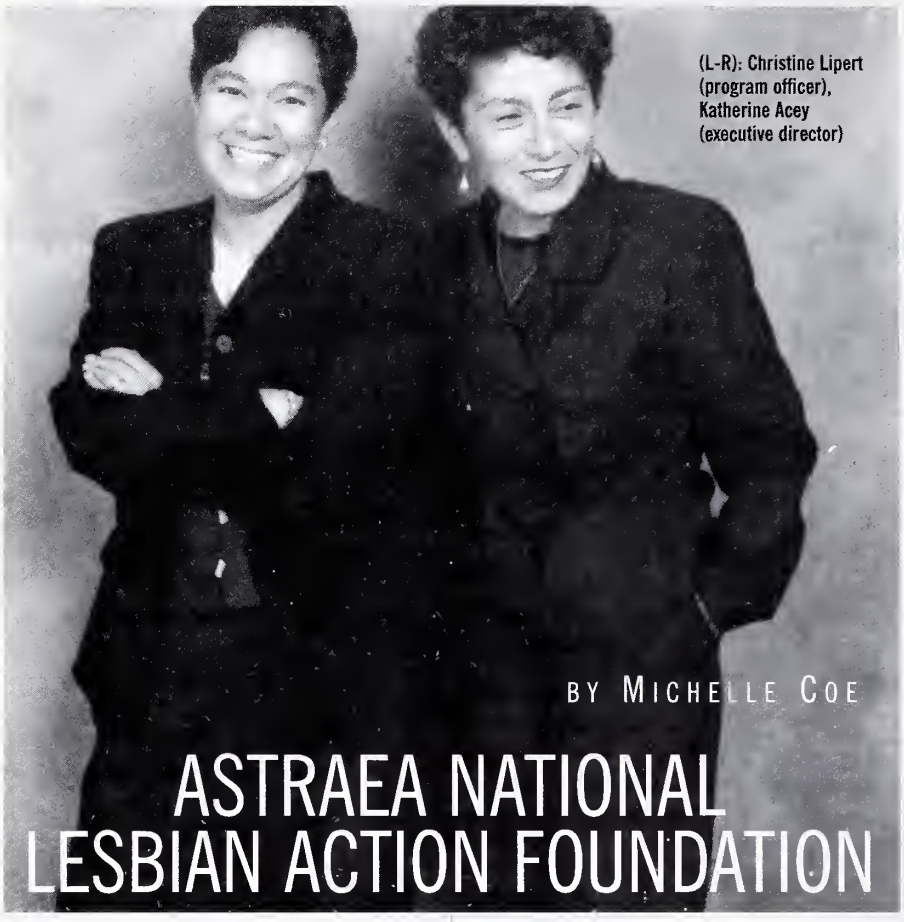
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(L-R): Christine Lipert (program officer), Katherine Acey (executive director)

BY MICHELLE COE

ASTRAEA NATIONAL LESBIAN ACTION FOUNDATION

Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation, Christine Lipat, Program Officer; Netta Mekhaeel, Program Assistant; 116 E. 16 St., 7th fl., New York, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021; fax: 982-3321; grants@astraea.org; www.astraea.org

What is the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation?
Astraea is a multicultural, feminist, public foundation whose mission is to distribute funds and provide assistance to organizations and projects that directly benefit or serve lesbians and to expand the community of individuals and institutions financially supporting lesbian issues. Astraea's mission is realized through a variety of program activities, including grantmaking, technical assistance, philanthropic education and organizing, and community building which foster progressive social change and the eradication of all forms of oppression and exploitation.

When and why did the Astraea Fund come into being?
Astraea was incorporated in 1978 as a regional (northeast) womens' foundation which was inclusive of lesbians. The Founding Mother's dream was to build a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-class foundation that would create a new kind of philanthropy which was responsive to and inclusive of women. In 1990, Astraea became a national foundation that focused on supporting organizations and projects that placed lesbians at the center of a larger vision for progressive social change. Most of our funding comes from individual donations.

The driving philosophy behind the Astraea Foundation is . . .
To operate in a feminist way that is geographically, racially inclusive and economically diverse, that respectfully involves staff, board, volunteers, and our constituency in appropriate levels of the decision-making process. We work to involve lesbians across ages, physical and mental abilities, sexual and gender identities, national identities, and religious affiliations in the dialogue for change.

What are the other grant programs you administer?
U.S Grants Program; International Fund for Sexual Minorities; Lesbian Writer's Fund; Margot Karle Scholarship; and Donor-Advised Funds. Astraea has given away more than $2.2 million in grants.

What additional programs do you offer to help propel your mission forward? Any that are specific to media artists?
Our U.S Grants Program funds film/video projects. Our Development Program includes the Membership Program, Leadership Giving Circles, Smart Women/Smart Money Conference, Events and Houseparties, and a Lesbian Visual Arts Project. We also offer training and technical assistance on fundraising, community building, leadership development, and financial management.

How has the funding climate for independent media changed since Astraea was incepted? Do you find that foundations have difficulty understanding media as a tool for social change?
It has been historically difficult for film/video and other kinds of media, such as print media, to get funding as a tool for progressive social change. The Right has always seen these tools as essential building blocks for supporting their movement-building. We need to do the same. That is why Astraea has prioritized giving to film/video and other media projects that help to represent the depth and complexity of lesbian experiences that document, reflect, and push lesbian involvement in our movements for change.

What types of projects do you seek?
We focus on funding lesbian-led film/video projects which explicitly address lesbian issues while making the interconnections between other oppressions within their work. Their process must be inclusive of the individuals they seek to represent.

Can individuals apply for Astraea grants or are they limited to organizations?
Individual film and videomakers can apply with a fiscal sponsor.

What's your advice on finding the right organization to be a fiscal sponsor? What are some other aspects to this relationship that filmmakers should take advantage of?
Find a fiscal sponsor that is in line with your own mission and values. It is helpful to find a fiscal sponsor that has a film/video fiscal sponsorship program already set up, because they can point you to other sources of support and can often provide other technical assistance workshops to help you through your production process.

What percentage of Astraea's overall budget goes towards film or video projects?
Approximately 20% of our U.S. Grants Program grants are to film/video projects.

How many media awards are given out per year? What is the total dollar amount awarded annually?
There is no limit to the amount of awards. In the last three years, we have funded from five to 15 projects per year at approximately $25,000 annually.

What is the average size of a grant?
Generally $1,000-$6,000; the average is near $3,000.

What's the ratio of applicants to recipients?
We receive about 30 to 40 film/video applications per year. 1 out of 3 applicants are chosen to receive grants.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ASTRAEA

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications?
We generally do not fund student projects. And applicants must be based in the U.S.

Do you fund projects at various stages of production? Can individuals come back to the Fund at various stages of production?
We fund pre-production, production, post-production, distribution. A grantee can reapply but it must be at another stage of production than their last grant.

Name some of the best known titles and/or artists Astraea has funded. What have been some of the distribution/exhibition paths of those projects?
Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis at 100 by Yvonne Welbon, *Sambal Belacan* by Madeleine Lim, *Out at Work* by Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson, *I'm Starving* by Yau Ching, Treyf by Alisa Lebow and Cynthia Madansky, *The Brandon Teena Story* by Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir, *MURDER and Murder* by Yvonne Rainer, *Paulina* by Vicki Funari, *Seduction Stories: Five Black South African Lesbians* by Barbara Hammer, and Dyke TV in New York, NY.

In regards to distribution, many of these films and videos have gone beyond the traditional LGBT [lesbian/gay/bisexual/transexual] and womens' film festivals to other festivals, targeted community groups and organizing conferences around the country.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
We have an annual postmark deadline of November 1. Applications can be downloaded from our website.

Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used?
Generally, the funds should be used within a year of receipt.

Who are the Program Officers?
Myself, Christine Lipat, Program Officer; Netta Mekhaeel, Program Assistant; and Katherine Acey, Executive Director.



Above: Director Lucy Winer and DP Frances Reid (L-R) with 90-year-old lesbian activist Christine Burton, the subject of Winer's *Golden Threads*.

Far left: New York library clerk Nat Keitt, in Kelly Anderson and Tami Gold's *Out at Work*.

From *For Gay Youth: An Educational Video for the 90s*, by Pam Walton.

Who makes the awards decisions? Name a few of your past panelists.
A volunteer Community Funding Panel of activists from around the country including those with film/video backgrounds. Past panelists include Graciela Sanchez, Happy Hyder, Mai Kiang, Eva Yaa Asantewaa, Kathleen Morris, and dozens of others.

Tell us a little about the review process.
If an applicant fits our criteria and guidelines, they are assigned to be interviewed (either by phone or in person) by a member of our Community Funding Panel. Sample videos and clips are screened; and the project is then presented by the interviewee/panelist to the larger CFP for discussion on whether or not to award a grant. For a November deadline, applicants are notified by the following March/April.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
Involve your constituents in the process, whether it be advisory or as crew; have a clear target audience and vision of how this could be used as a tool for social change; provide a plan for how you will support the distribution of it beyond sending it to film festivals or signing up with a distributor; involve crew members or an advisory team that can show evidence of artistic merit; provide a treatment which illustrates your approach.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
Most distribution plans are weak. A distribution plan shows us the vision for how the film/video will actually reach the target audience, how the filmmaker plans to distribute her film/video to the hands of organizers who can use it as a tool for social change, and how she plans to help change people's thinking around an issue or lifestyle. Sometimes applicants say that they plan to reach anyone and everyone but they do not explain the feasibility, the why or the how. If the target audiences are not clear to the filmmaker or to us as readers, chances are the point of the story might not be so clear either.

An additional mistake is that too much emphasis is placed on the project's underlying philosophy without a clear treatment outline or plan.

What would people most be surprised to learn about the Astraea Foundation and/or its founders?
We are one of the largest lesbian organizations in the U.S. We provide one of the largest annual grants to emerging lesbian writers. We are the only LGBT foundation that runs an international grantmaking program.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.
The Funding Exchange, Global Fund for Women, Boston Women's Fund.

Famous last words:
Have a vision and live it for yourself and in the service of others.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (AUG. 1 FOR OCT. ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: SCOTT@AIVF.ORG

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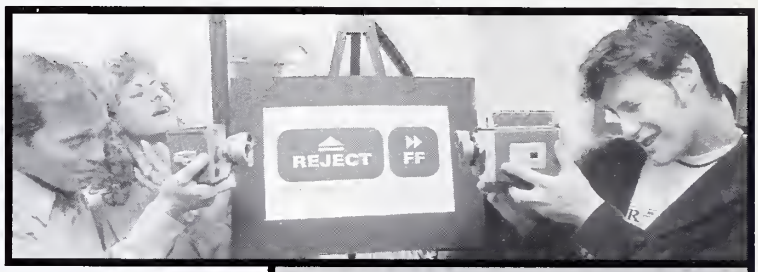
CINEMATEXAS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 18-22, TX. Deadlines: June 16 (early); July 16 (final). 5th annual fest brings together those who share a passion for the ever-mutating short cinema. Emerging as one of the premiere short film festivals in the world, fest features multimedia performances by musicians & artists. Retrospectives have incl. the short films of Robert Altman & Mike Leigh. Finalists compete regardless of format, genre or category for the prestigious Gecko awards. Up to $20,000 in cash, services & in-kind prizes. Submissions of films & videos 50 min. or less, completed on or after Jan. 1999 are welcome. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, Betacam SP, 3/4", S-VHS, VHS (all video, NTSC only). Preview on VHS. Entry fees $25 (early); $35 (final). Entry forms available on website. Contact: Cinematexas, Radio/TV/Film Dept., Univ. of Texas, CMA 6.118, Austin, TX 78712; (512) 471-6497; fax: 471-4077; cinematexas@cinematexas.org; www.cinematexas.org

COLOSSAL FILM CRAWL, Sept. 14, SC. Deadlines: June 23; July 14 (late). 4th annual fest "celebrates short films & videos by artists in the Southeast." Films of all genres & subject matter under 30 min. considered. Filmmakers must currently reside in the Carolinas, GA, FL, KY, TN, AL, MI, LA, VA. Cats: any style or genre; preference will be given to films made in the past year. Incl. 25-50 word synopsis w/ entry. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10; $15 (late). Contact: CFC, c/o Free Times, 130 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia, SC 29169; (803) 739-2488 x. 23; www.freetimes.com

COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 24-27, OH. Deadline: July 1. Competitive fest, founded in 1952, is one of the older nontheatrical showcases in country. Accepts ind. & corporate prod. in 13 major divisions w/ about 10 cats in each (97 cats in all). Divisions: Arts, Entertainment, Business & Industry; Children & Youth (new this year); Education & Information; Humanities; Mental Health; Physical Health; Religion; Science & Technology; Social Issues; CD-ROM. Other divisions incl. Media of Print; Screenwriting; Student Competition (animation/exp, doc, drama/comedy, screenwriting). Chris Awards go to best of cat.; 2nd place Bronze Plaques, Certificates of Honorable Mention & Silver Chris statuette (Best of Division) also awarded. Formats: 1/2", CD-ROM. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $75 & up (for professionals); $35-50 (for students). Contact: CIFVF, Joyce Long, Awards Admin., Film Council of Greater Columbus, 5701 N. High St., Ste. 200, Worthington, OH 43085; ph/fax: (614) 841-1666; info@chrisawards.org; www.chrisawards.org

DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 12-21, CO. Deadline: July 14. 23rd annual invitational expo of film presents approx. 150 films over 10 days & plays host to more than 75 film artists. New int'l releases, cutting-edge indie fiction films & docs, animation, experimental works, children's programs & shorts included. In addition, a number of int'l film artists are honored w/ tributes. Cats: feature, doc, animation, experimental, children, short. Awards incl. Lifetime Achievement Award, the John Cassavetes Award, the Krzysztof Kieslowski Award for best European film, the Cinema Award to best indie film w/out U.S. distribution & the People's Choice Award for most popular feature-length fiction & doc films. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & video. Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL). Entry fee: $30; $20 (students). Contact: DIFF, Denver Film Society, 1430 Larimer Square, Ste. 201, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 595-3456; fax: 595-0956; dfs@denverfilm.org; www.denverfilm.org

D.U.M.B.O. SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-15, NY. Deadline: July 20. Film & video event is part of the 4th annual D.U.M.B.O. Art Under the Bridge Festival & is designed to showcase the work of independent & experimental film & videomakers living in NYC's five boroughs. Works must be 30 min. or less. Formats: 16mm, VHS, S-VHS, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20 Contact: DSFVF, D.U.M.B.O. Arts Center, 30 Washington St., Brooklyn, NY 11201; ph/fax: (718) 624-3772.



REJECTION SEATS

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try, again" may seem like an accurate but trite motto for independent filmand videomakers, but it's especially apropos in Philadelphia. Since 1997, the Reject Filmfest has been doling out second chances in the City of Brotherly Love. After being turned down by a large local festival, filmmakers D. Mason Bendewald (pictured on left) and Don Argott (r) began Reject as a publicity stunt, but stuck with the concept and developed it into a major annual event. To be considered, a rejection letter from another festval *must* accompany your entry. The organizers are open to films of all genres, but warn against sending home movies, reminding us that they showcase "rejected films, not bad ones." See Listing.

EMPIRE STATE FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 15-Oct. 15, NY. Deadline: July 1. 5th annual int'l ind. film & video fest reaches thousands in extensive statewide tour. Screens in Manhattan, Rochester, Ithaca, Albany, Buffalo, Saratoga Springs & Bombay, India. Prizes awarded in cats of narrative, doc, experimental, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30 (shorts); $50 (features); student discount avail. Contact: ESFF, Box 1313, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866; (212) 802-4679; fax: (518) 580-2328; empirefilm@aol.com; www.empirefilm.com

FILM ARTS FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT CINEMA, Nov. 1-5, CA. Deadlines: June 16 (early); July 7 (final). FAF-sponsored, noncompetitive fest invites submissions of independent films & videos of any length, genre or subject by N. California media artists. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10 (early); $15 (final). Contact: FAFIC, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760; fax: 552-0882; festival@filmarts.org; www.filmsarts.org

FIRSTGLANCE L.A.: INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Late Oct.-Early Nov., CA. Deadline: July 15. Fest's inaugural year in Los Angeles encourages both student & professional film- & videomakers w/ low-budget, mini-budgets & micro-budgets. Fest's mission is to exhibit all genres of work (film, video & digital productions) from mainstream to controversial in a competitive casual atmosphere. Cats incl. feature (over 60 min.), narrative (under 60 min.), doc (under 60 min.), experimental, animation, music video, student projects. Special category: Shot in Philadelphia, any project directed, shot or set in Philadelphia or any principal cast or crew member originally from the Philadelphia area. Awards incl. Free trip to L.A., fest tickets, fest t-shirt &/or "Best of Philly" prize package & prize money for student cat. Entry fees: $30; $25 (students). All formats acceptable. Preview on VHS (NTSC). For appl. & registration packet send SASE to: FirstGlance L.A., c/o Firstglance Films, Director, Box 571105, Tarzana CA 91356; www.newimaging.com

HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 3-19, HI. Deadline: Aug. 4. 20th annual fest held Nov. 3-12 (Honolulu) & Nov. 14-19 (neighboring islands). All lengths & genres invited, dedicated to promoting crosscultural understanding among peoples of Asia, N. America & the Pacific region through the presentation of features, docs & shorts dealing w/ relevant subject matter. Last year fest presented over 100 films across six islands to over 65,000 people—the U.S.'s only statewide film fest. Awards: Golden Mile Award (decided by int'l jury) for features & docs. Other awards incl. Audience Award, Cinematography Award, and the Hawaii Film & Videomaker Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, IMAX. Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL/SECAM). Entry fee: $35. Contact: HIFF, Bruce Fletcher, Programmer, 1001 Bishop St., Pacific Tower, Ste. 745, Honolulu, HI 96813; (808) 528-3456; fax: 528-1410; info@hiff.org; www.hiff.org

IMAGEOUT: ROCHESTER LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-21, NY. Deadline: July 5. Fest, now in 8th year, is "an exciting & important venue for lesbian, gay, and queer film- & videomakers." Last year fest screened 37 programs, incl. more than 120 films & videos. Seeking short & feature-length films & videos, incl. narrative, docs & experimental from across the U.S. & around the world. Also features "Third Coast" call, highlighting filmmakers from the U.S. & Canada who live w/in a 200-mile radius of the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Seaway. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $5. Contact: ImageOut, 274 N. Goodman Street, Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 271-2640; fax: 271-3798; imageout@servtech.com; www.imageout.org

LATINO FILM FESTIVAL OF MARIN/BERKELEY, Nov. 1-11, CA. Deadline: July 1. 4th annual competitive fest seeks works in any genre by or about Latino in the U.S. & int'ly. Fest showcases artistic or educational films by or about Latinos & expresses the cultural diversity of all Latino countries as a source of inspiration & empowerment. Works must have been completed in last two years. Cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation. Awards: Best Short, Best Doc, Best Film by Women, Best Student Film, Audience Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: LFFM, 3100 Kerner Blvd., Ste. G, San Rafael, CA 94901; (415) 459-3530; fax: 456-0560; cinefest@latinofilmfestival.org; www.latinofilmfestival.org

MADCAT WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., CA. Deadline: July 16. The only women's film fest in the Bay Area seeks experimental, avant-garde & innovative independent films of all genres & lengths. Films which challenge the use of sound & image, exploring notions of visual storytelling. Fest also tours w/ selected works. Formats: 16mm, super 8, Beta, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fee $10-30 (sliding scale/pay what you can afford!). Entry forms available at FAF office or contact: MCWIFF, Ariella Ben-Dov, 937 Fell St., San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 436-9523; fax: 934-0642; alionbear@earthlink.net; www.somaglow.com/madcat

MANHATTAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 22, NY. Deadline: July 31. Fest is held in Union Square Park, NYC & exists for filmmakers w/out backing or resources to create a feature film. Film can be no longer than 10 min. in length. Cats: short, any style or genre. Awards: 54,000 feet of 35mm film; complete 35mm camera pkg; all processing/developing/prints/dailies. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DV, Digibeta, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: MSFF, 630 9th Ave., Ste. 800, 8th fl., New York, NY 10036; (212) 613-5878; fax: 586-2420; msfilmfest@aol.com; www.msfilmfest.com

MICROCINEFEST, Nov. 1-5, MD. Deadline: July 31. Annual fest turns audiences on to ambitious, low budget, underground films. Seeking films w/ "substream/psychotronic bent that display creativity, originality, entertainment & a wise use of funds." Cats: shorts, features, animation, experimental, doc, narrative. Awards: Audience Choice, Low Budget Award to the coolest video made for under $100; and film made for under $1,000. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, super 8, VHS, 3/4", DVD, and miniDV. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 (30 min. & under); $25 (over 30 min.); films 7 min. & under, mutiply number of min. by 2 (4 min.= $8). Contact: Microcinefest, Skizz Cyzyk, 3700 Beech Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211; (410) 243-5307; bfink@bcpl.net; www.microcinefest.org

MIX: NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 15-19, NY. Deadline: July 1. Longest-running lesbian & gay film fest in NYC & premiere int'l venue for emerging artists & experimental media. In conjunction w/ PlanetOut, MIX will present Online Queer Digifest. Fest requests all genres, as well as audio/visual installations, cyber submissions of interactive & digital media plus media-based performance. MIX Innovator Awards: Producer Award, Maker Award & Emerging Maker Award. Formats: VHS (NTSC), Beta, 16mm, 35mm, super 8, S-VHS, 3/4". Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $20. Contact: MIX, 29 John St., PNB 132, New York, NY 10038; (212) 571-4242; fax: 571-5155; info@mixnyc.org; www.mixnyc.org

NIGHT OF THE BLACK INDEPENDENTS, Aug. 5-6, GA. Deadline: July 7. 7th annual fest is held during the National Black Arts Festival to expose works by African-American

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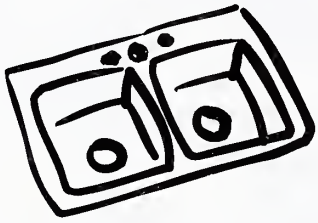
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film & video artists. Awards given in cats: narrative, doc, animation & student. Formats: VHS, S-VHS, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Contact: NBI, Box 77305, Atlanta, GA 30357; (770) 281-4669; nightoftheblackindependents@mail.com; www.oe-pages.com/ARTS/Movies/nbi

REJECT FILMFEST, Oct. 11-14, PA. Deadlines: July 31 (early); Aug. 31 (final). Founded in 1997, fest established to give film- & videomakers a second chance. Entrants must show proof of rejection from another fest (actual letter from fest or signed affidavit swearing you're telling the truth). Awards given in cats: narrative short & feature, doc short & feature, animation, and experimental. Films must be technically sound & completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (shorts, under 45 min.); $30 (features, 45 min. & over) early/$30 (shorts); $40 (features) final. Contact: PFFF, 1124 Walnut St. Ste. 4, Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 574-0911; fax: 238-0663; mason@minimacepro.com; www.rejectfilmfest.org

TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 1-4, CO. Deadline: July 15. 27th annual fest is an educational event held in a Colorado mountain town celebrates the art of film, selling out each year with over 5,000 film afficionados arriving from around the world. The program consists of approx. 25 film events incl. tributes, seminars, filmmaker conversations, picnics & parties. Open to all professional & non-professional filmmakers working in all aesthetic disciplines: doc, narrative, animation, experimental, etc. Features & shorts of all styles & lengths are eligible for consideration provided they are premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, all video (NTSC, PAL, SECAM). Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM). Entry fees: $35 (19 min. or less); $55 (20-39 min.); $75 (40-59 min.); $95 (60 min. and over); $25 (student films, any length) Contact: TFF, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH 03801; (603) 433-9202; fax: 433-9206; tellufilm@aol.com; www.telluridefilmfestival.com

URBANWORLD, Aug. 2-6, NY. Deadline: June 30. Competitive Black and Latino fest showcases features, shorts, docs & animation. If director is Black or Latino film may be of any subject matter. Otherwise films must feature Blacks or Latinos in prominent roles. Fest will also feature Asian sidebar. Films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Non-English films must be subtitled. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25; $40 (screenplay entries). Contact: UW, Film Submissions, 375 Greenwich St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 501-9668; fax: 941-3849; tony@urbanworld.com; www.urbanworld.com

VERMONT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 26-29, VT. Deadline: July 15. Going into 15th year, fest devoted to presenting images & issues for social change. Categories: War & Peace, Justice/Human Rights & Environment, Political/Public Policy. Awards given in each cat. Fest is 4 days long & accompanied by other events. Formats: Digital, 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2", S-VHS, Hi-8, 8mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $65. Contact: VIFF, One Main St., Union Station, Burlington, VT 05401; (802) 660-2600; fax: 860-9555; viff@together.com; www.vtiff.org

Foreign

BAHIA FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 12-18, Brazil. Deadline: July 31. "Por Um Mondo Mais Humano" (For a More Humanistic World) is motto of fest & market. In its 26th ed. fest open to Ibero-American prods as well as non-Ibero-American prods on Latin Amer. subjects. Held in the Brazilian city "that best synthesizes the encounter of the Afro-Indian Iberian & American cultural inheritance." Program incl. film & video conquest, retros, symposia & exhibitions. Market takes place during fest; objective is "to create an alternative space for commercialization & int'l distribution of exp. & ind. film & video prods." Market will disseminate promotional materials sent by participants. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: Tatu de Ouro prizes in following cats: film/video doc; film/video-fiction; film/video animation/exp.; film/video made by non-Ibero-American about Latin America; plus Best Feature Doc; Best Videoclip; Best Dir.; Best Script; Best Photography; Best Editing; Best Sound. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (max length: 60 min.). Entry fee: $50, payable to FAPEX (market). Contact: BFF, Guidao Araujo, dir./Milena (asst.), Rua Barao de Geremoabo s/n, Campus Universitario de Ondina, 40. 170-290 Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; 011 55 71 235 4392; fax: 55 71 337 1851; jornada@ufba.br; www.jornadabahia.cjb.net

CINEMA TOUT ECRAN, Sept. 20-26, Switzerland. Deadline: Aug. 10. Fest presents films of artistic quality produced for TV. Cats incl. Official Competition, series & sollections, and short films. Awards presented in all cats. Formats: DigiBeta, Beta, 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: CTE, 16 rue General Dufour, DP 5305, CH-1211, Geneva 11, Switzerland; 011 41 22 328 85 54; fax: 41 22 329 68 02; info@cinema-tout-ecran.ch; www.cinema-tout-ecran.ch

CORK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 15-22, Ireland. Deadline: July 1. Founded in 1956, aim is to "bring Irish audiences the best in world cinema in all its variety, to champion the art of the short film & provide a forum for creative interchange of ideas w/in film community." Fest's program is eclectic, bringing together new int'l films w/ other forms of film art, incl. doc, short, animation & exp. film. Program also incl. retro sidebars, seminars & master classes. Entry cats incl. features, docs, shorts. Fest welcomes films for young audiences (UnReel sidebar) & films for lesbian & gay audiences (Pink sidebar). Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs to be eligible for competition sections & must not have screened previously in Ireland in theaters or on TV. Competitive for films under 30 min. Other sections incl. Irish Showcase & Focus On section devoted to filmmakers whose work excites fest committee. Screenings take place at Cork Opera House, Kino Cinema & Triskel Arts Centre, which has a gallery & cafe and is fest meeting place/press center. Awards for best int'l, European & Irish shorts; also for shorts in black & white. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: CIFF, Michael Hannigan, Fest Director, 10 Washington St., Cork, Ireland; 011 353 21 427 1711; fax: 353 21 427 5945; ciff@indigo.ie; www.corkfilmfest.org

FILMFEST HAMBURG, Sept. 25 to Oct. 1, Germany. Deadline: July 7. Fest founded in 1969 is noncompetitive survey of new int'l prods, incl. special section on first films & special sections on countries & regions, shorts & Hamburg prods. Fest w/ highest number of N. American indie productions in Germany. Cats: features, docs, animation. Entries must have been completed after June 30, 1999 & must not have been shown in Germany. About 100 films are showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: FFH, Josef Wutz, fest director, Friedensallee 44, 22765 Hamburg, Germany; 011 49 40 399 19 00 0; fax: 49 40 399 19 00 10; filmfest-hamburg@t-online.de; www.filmfesthamburg.de

KYIV INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-29, Ukraine. Deadline: July 15. Competitive fest, a.k.a. Molodist ("Youth"

in Ukrainian), is focused on the work of young filmmakers. Cats: student films, first professional animated films, first pro short fiction films (under 45 min.), first pro features (over 60 min.). Animated films must have been produced after 1/1/98; non-animated film after 1/1/99. Awards: Grand Prix for best film "the Scythian Deer," Best Film in each cat, Audience Prize (cash & prizes accompanying awards. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: KIFF Molodist, Dom Kino, Ste. 115, 6 Saksagansky St., 01033 Kyiv, Ukraine; 011 380 44 246 6798; fax: 380 44 227 4557; molodist@gu.kiev.ua; www.dkmedi.com/molodist

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 5-20, UK. Deadline: June 23. Fest welcomes film, video & multimedia entries of any length incl. docs, animation & experimental. Entries must have been completed after July 1999 & not submitted to Leeds before. Prints w/ separate sound & DigiBeta tapes cannot be screened. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation, educational. Awards: Louis le Prince International Short Film Competition & Leeds New Directors Competition for first-time directors. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (PAL/NTSC). No entry fee (incl. SASE for return). Contact: LIFF, Charlotte Fergusson, Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds LS1 3AD, UK; 011 44 113 247 8389/8398; fax: 44 113 247 8397; charlotte.fergusson@leeds.gov.uk; www.leeds.gov.uk/liff

MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 25-Sept. 4, Canada. Deadline: June 16 (shorts); July 7 (features). Only competitive fest in N. America recognized by FIAPF. Founded in '77, large & int'ly known fest boasts audiences of over 300,000 & programs hundreds of films. 9 cats: Official Competition (features & shorts); World Greats (official selection, noncompetitive); Focus on One Country's Cinema; Latin American Cinema; World Cinema: Reflections of Our Time; Cinema of Tomorrow: New Trends; Panorama Canada; TV Films; Tributes. Awards: Grand Prix of Americas to best film; Special Grand Prix of Jury, Best Director, Best Actress/Actor; Best Screenplay & Best Artistic Contribution (awarded to technician). Shorts compete for 1st & 2nd Prize. Second jury awards Prix de Montreal to director of 1st fiction feature; all 1st features in all cats eligible. Other awards: Air Canada Prize for most popular feature of fest, prize for Best Canadian Feature Film awarded by public, Oecumenical Prize & FIPRESCI Prize. Features in competition must be 70mm or 35mm, prod in 12 months preceding fest, not released commercially outside of country of origin & not entered in any competitive int'l film fest (unreleased films given priority). Films prod by & for TV eligible for competition if theatrical exploitation planned; industrial, advertising & instructional films ineligible. Shorts must be 70mm or 35mm & must not exceed 15 min. Fest held in 14 theaters, all in downtown Montreal w/in walking distance of fest headquarters. Some 2,500 industry pros annually accredited. Cats: short, feature, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 70mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: MWFF, Serge Losique, Festival Director, 1432 Bleury St., Montreal, Quebec Canada H3A 2J1; (514) 848-3883; 933-9699; fax: 848-3886; ffm@qc.aira.com; www.ffm-montreal. org

PALERMO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SPORTS FILM, Nov. 6-10, Italy. Deadline: July 31. Sports films & videos are focus of fest., founded in '79. Open to features, shorts & videos prod. w/in last 3 yrs. Entries judged in 2 sections: film & video. Top prize is Prix Paladino d'Oro; medal "Città di Palermo" & 5,000.000 lire (approx. $2,425). Special sections incl. "Opere in concorso" & "Agonismo e Spettacolo." Formats: 35mm, 16 mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. No entry fee. Contact: PIFSF, Vito Maggio, director, Rassegna Città di Palermo/Int'l Sportfilmfest, via XII Gennaio, 32 90141 Palermo, Italy; 011 39 091 334609; fax: 39 091 6114968; sporfife@libero.it

SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 21-30, Spain. Deadline: June 30. Held in an elegant Basque seaside city, San Sebastian, which celebrates its 48th year, is one of most important film fests in Spain, in terms of "glitter" sections, facilities, attendance (over 150,000), competition, partying & number of films. City is known for its food, beaches & quaint streets. Fest attracts a number of int'l celebrities (over 1,400 int'l guests) as well as wide selection of nat'l & int'l press (more than 1,000 journalists). Fest shows features only—narrative mostly, with a few exp or exp/doc in parallel sections. Fest sections incl. Official Competition; Zabaltegi (open zone), section showing films from other fests, first films & films made by jury members; 4 retro cycles; selection of recent Spanish language films; films for children. In Official Section (18 features), only 35mm feature films, prod. in preceding 12 mos., not presented in any other competitive fest & not theatrically screened in Spain eligible. Int'l jury awards the following: Golden Shell to Best Film; Silver Shell to Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress; Special Jury Award; Special Prize for Best Cinematography and Best Screenplay. Directors of selected films (in some cases, actors) invited to fest; hotel accommodation covered. Zabaltegi section shows 30-40 features. New Directors Award of 25,000,000 ptas (approx. $165,000) to best 1st or 2nd 35mm feature fiction, for the director & the producer of winning film. Audience prize of 5,000,000 ptas (approx. $33,000) awarded to distributor of best film in Zabaltegi not competing for New Directors prize. Formats: 35mm (competition); 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: SSIFF, fest dir., Plaza de Oquendo s/n, Donostia, San Sebastian 20004, Spain; tel: 011 34 943 48 1212; fax: 34 943 48 1218; ssiff@mail.ddnet.es; U.S. east coast contact: Joyce Pierpoline, 228 West 15 St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 929-3303; fax: 929-3730; U.S. west coast contact: Berenice Reynaud, c/o CA Inst. of the Arts, 24700 McBean, Valencia, CA 91355; (661) 255-1050 x. 2421; fax: (323) 665-3440

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 28-Nov 5, Japan. 13th annual fest. is a major int'l competition, annual FIAPF-accredited event which incl. Competition, Special Screenings, Cinema Prism, Nippon Cinema now & Classics & Symposiums. All films selected & invited for the Competition must meet the following conditions: 1) 35mm feature films must have been completed after July 1, 1999. 2) Film must be one of the director's first 3 feature films in 35mm. 3) 35mm feature films must not have already competed at another competitive int'l fest. 4) Shorts under 60 min. not accepted. 5) Doc films ineligible. 6) Foreign features should not receive commercial release in Japan prior to conclusion of fest. All invited films will have Japanese subtitles (cost borne by fest) Cats: feature, any style or genre. Awards: Int'l Jury panel selecting winners for awards incl: Tokyo Grand Prix (cash prize of ¥10 million; $94,570, Special Jury Prize, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Leading Actress, Best Leading Actor, Best Artistic Contribution. Formats: 35mm only. Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL/SECAM). No entry fee. Contact: TIFF, Toshiyuki Horie, Secretary General 3F, Landic Ginza Bldg., No.2, 1-6-5 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan; 011 813 3563 6305; fax: 813 3563 6310; www.tokyo-filmfest.or.jp

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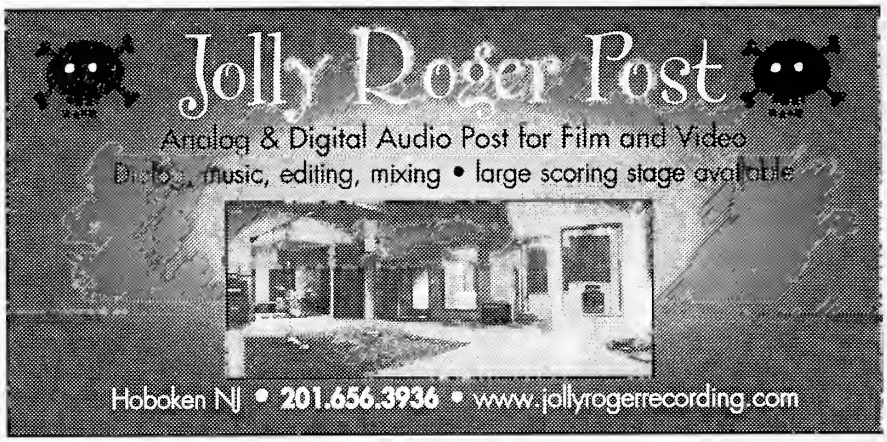
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UPPSALA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 16-22, Sweden. Deadline: July 24. Located north of Stockholm in univ. town, fest estab in '82, programs int'l docs & shorts (around 120) & children's films. Competition cats incl. short fiction films (max 20 min.; 20-60 min.), animation, doc, exp. & children's films. Films on all subjects welcomed, amateur as well as professional. Program also incl. retros, exhibits & seminars. Entries must be under 60 min., produced no more than 2 yrs prior to fest & not broadcast or commercially screened in Sweden. Awards incl. Grand Prix, 25,000 SEK (approx $ 2,845), 2nd & 3rd Jury Prizes, Audience Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC or Pal). No entry fee. Contact: UISFF, Anders Engstrom, P.O. Box 1746, S-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden; 011 46 18 12 00 25; fax: 46 18 12 13 50; uppsala@shortfilmfestival.com; www.shortfilmfestival.com

VALLADOLID INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-28, Spain. Deadline: June 30. Fest seeks "films of artistic quality which contribute to the knowledge of worldwide cinematography." Work must have been produced in '99-'00 & not previously screened in Spain. Formats: 35mm (official selection); 35mm & 16mm (Time of History, doc competition). Awards: cash prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: VIFF, Teatro Calderón, Calle Leopoldo Cano, s/n, 47003, Valladolid, Spain; 011 34 983 305 700; fax: 34 983 309 835; festvalladolid@seminci.com; www.seminci.com

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-Oct. 5, Canada. Deadline: July 14. Founded in '82, fest presents 300 films from 50 countries at 6 cinemas over 17 days. It has become one of N. America's larger int'l fests (after Montreal & Toronto). Est. 130,000 people attend, incl. about 300 invited guests representing filmmakers, stars, buyers & sellers, critics & other industry pros from around world. Special sections incl. Dragons & Tigers: Cinemas of East Asia; Canadian Images; Nonfiction Features, 30 film program devoted to current doc filmmaking; Walk on the Wild Side, midnight series of films devoted to "lovers of extreme cinema"; Archival Series; Screenwriter's Art & annual film & TV trade forum. Fest accepts Canadian shorts & features but only feature films from outside Canada that have not been screened commercially or broadcast in British Columbia. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: Air Canada Award for Most Popular Film; Federal Express Award for Most Popular Canadian Film; Alcan Dragons & Tigers Award for Young Cinema ($5,000 cash); Rogers Award for Best Canadian Screenplay (computer hardware & software prize); Nat'l Film Board of Canada Awards for Best Doc Feature & Best Animated Film (cash prize). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Non-Canadian entry fee: $50 ($30 US). Contact: VIFF, PoChu AuYeung, Program Manager, 1008 Homer St, #410, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6B 2X1; (604) 685-0260; fax: 688-8221; viff@viff.org; www.viff.org

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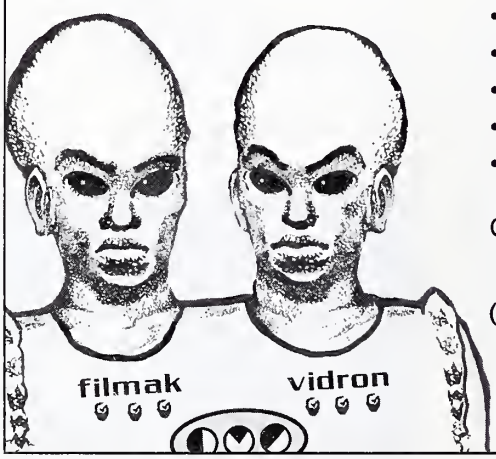
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SOUND EDITING/MIXING on full blown Pro Tools system. Solid synch. Killer sound design. Much exp. w/ indie filmmakers. Mixes at Sundance, Berlin, MoMA, Lincoln Center, Viennale, HBO, et. al. CocoLoco Independent Sound (212) 563-5021.

VIDEO PROJECTOR FOR RENT: Show your work on the big screen. $200/day, decks and sound equipment available. David (212) 362-1056.

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. THE INDEPENDENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., AUG. 1 FOR OCT. ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

ACCOLADES TV SCRIPT CONTEST: Screenplay competition designed to provide outlet for emerging talent & undiscovered screenwriters in increasingly impenetrable industry. Finalist judges include agents, managers & other industry executives. Entry fee: $35 to $50, depending on TV format (1/2 hr, 1 hr, 2 hr). Grand Prize: $2,500; Genre Cat. Prizes: $500. Deadline: July 31. Appl. avail on website. Call or write: Accolades TV, 2118 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 160B, Santa Monica, CA 90403; ph./fax: (310) 453-2523; info@americanaccolades.com; www.americanaccolades.com/AccoladesTV.htm

AMERICAN DREAMER 2000 competition encourages new, groundbreaking scriptwriters & filmmakers to pursue careers in scriptwriting. Appl. avail. online. Send SASE with entry for 6-page general review of all scripts submitted. Fill out questionnaire & company will work w/ you for 3 months on tightening up your script. $5,000 for "each writing sample that we accept as an outstanding production option." All applicants who win through American Dreamer get Web page listing on site. Entry fees: $50; $60 (late). Deadlines: July 4; August 5 (late). American Dreamer 2000, Box 20457, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 325-0451 fax: 320-7724; american_dreamer@bigfoot.com; www.ADfilmworks.com

BIG AUSTRALIAN INT'L SCREENWRITING COMPETITION offers $10,000 cash award plus 2-week trip for 2 to Hawaii or Sydney for winner; 10 other finalists get $1,000 each; 20 semi-finalists each receive in-depth script analysis valued at $150. All scripts are logged online & all contestants will receive a copy of judges' scorecards. Entry fees & deadlines: $65 (July 31); $75 (Aug. 31); $85 (Sept. 30). Call or write: Big Australian Int'l Screenwriting Competition, c/o The Source World Wide Scripservice Pty Ltd., Box 356 Woollahra N.S.W. 2025, Sydney, Australia; fax: 011 61 2 9326-1483 or 61 7 5538-4465; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/the-big-australian

COLLEGE STUDENTS' VIDEO CONTEST sponsored by The Christophers. Theme is "One Person Can Make a Difference." Deadline: June 16. Cash prizes totalling $6,000 will be awarded. A nonprofit organization founded in 1945, The Christophers' ethos is based on "the Judeo-Christian concept of service to God and all humanity,' and aimed at "people of all faiths and of no particular faith." Entry forms for 13th annual contest: (212)759-4050; tci@idt.net; www.christophers.org/vidcon2k.html

FILM STUDENTS—CALL FOR ENTRIES: Angelus Awards Student Film Festival accepting submissions through July 1. Cash prizes, gifts, Directors Guild screenings. Contact: (800) 874-9999; www.angelus.org

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Establ. to give you experience, feedback & direction as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer, or development company sit up & take notice. You may enter one-page synopsis of screenplay you've already written or intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, plus a free Script Detail of screenplay of your choice. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted; info@ thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entry-form.html

JURY OF YOUR PEERS 2000: Annual competition judged entirely by aspiring screenwriters. Until now there has been no voice for the aspiring writer. As a unit, the up-and-coming writers of the United States & abroad exist as the undiscovered frontier of Hollywood.

Cats: Feature Film Drama, Feature Film Comedy, TV Sitcom, TV 1-hr Drama. Contest open only to writers who have never had a script optioned or purchased or who have never served in any manner in the writing for any TV or motion picture either in pilot form or in actual produced piece. Awards: Peer recognition, cash (7% of entry fee pot), software, subscriptions. Entry fee: $55; deadline: July 15. Details: PeerJury2000@aol.com; www.juryofyourpeers2000.hypermart.net

NEW ENGLAND SCREENWRITERS CONFERENCE seeks feature length, English language, original, un-optioned screenplays for 3rd annual competition. Finalists invited to NESC, receive industry intros & $5,000 in cash prizes. Deadline: July 8. Send SASE to Tom Dooley, Screenwriting Competition Dir., Providence Film Foundation, Box 6705, Providence, RI 02940; (401) 751-9300; www.NES creenwriters.com

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature-length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ $40 entry fee payable to NTV, 21 Central Park West, Ste. 1T, NY, NY 10023.

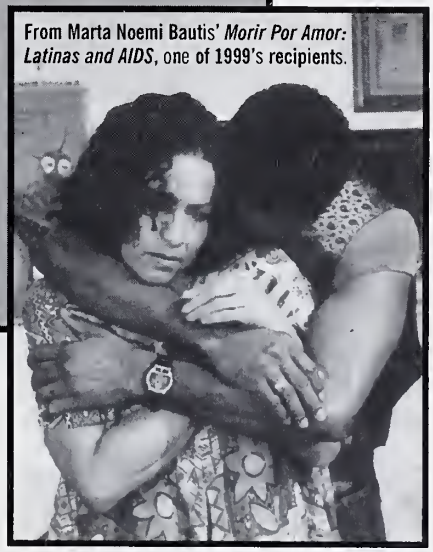
SANTA FE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION 2001 co-founded by screenwriting teacher & author Rick Reichman & award-winning writer/director Larry N. Stouffer, is accepting submissions through Oct. 31. Top five awards: $2,000, $1,000, $500, $250, $125; next 15 finalists get $50 each. Top five also get free tuition to their annual screenwriting conference held in Santa Fe Memorial Day weekend. Entries receive script critique & notes. Call (505) 424-1501; www.SFeSC.com

SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Screenplays must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced (see entry form for other rules). Top three awards: $2,000, $1,000, $500. Also software plus submission to major literary agency & major studio. Entry fee: $60. Deadline: July 12. Contact: Allen Glazier, Slamdance Screenplay Competition Director, 6381 Hollywood Blvd, #520, L.A., CA 90028; (323) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; AGlazier@Slamdance.com; www.slamdance.com

INTO THE MARKET

Are you an NY-based filmmaker with a finished film but nothing left over for promotion? The New York State Council on the Arts' Electronic Media & Film Program awards funds to recently completed independent media arts projects up to a maximum of $5,000. Audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work, and installation art are all eligible for the fund which is managed by National Video Resources. Eligibility conditions include residency in the state, submission of a detailed distribution plan, and completion of the project between Jan. 1999 and June 2000. Funds can go toward duplicating original materials (such as dubs, release prints), subtitling, promotional expenses etc.

See listing.



From Marta Noemi Bautis' *Morir Por Amor: Latinas and AIDS*, one of 1999's recipients.

Conferences & Workshops

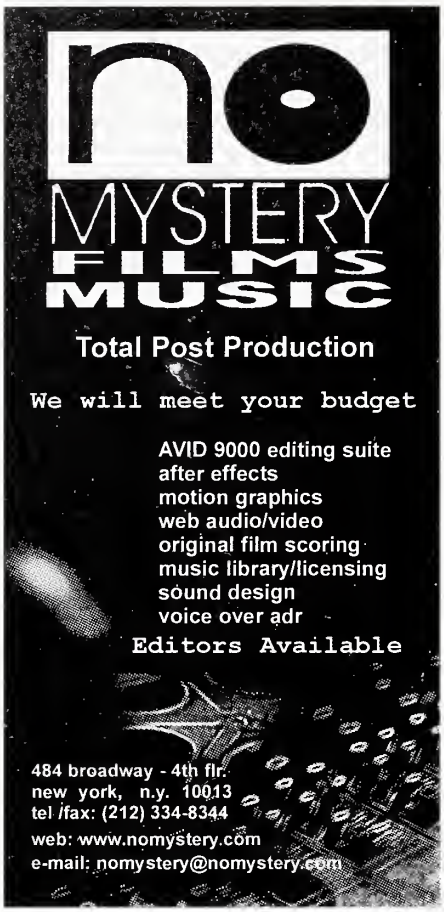
NALIP CONFERENCE—2nd annual conference of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers will be held July 6-9 in Miami Beach, FL. Panel & workshop topics will incl. cable financing & distribution, bilingualism & pitching projects. Details: (612) 874-2819; www.nalip.org

SELLING TO HOLLYWOOD—13th annual Screenwriters Conference of American Screenwriters Assoc. Aug. 3-6 at Hilton Glendale, L.A. Contact: ASA Selling to Hollywood Screenwriters Conference, Box 292010, Kettering, OH 45429-0010; (937) 640-2690; fax: (513) 731-9212. Early registration: June 15. info@sellingtohollywood.com; www.sellingtohollywood.com

"**TUCSON 2000**," The Alliance for Community Media's 2000 Int'l Conference & Trade Show, July 12-15, Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson, AZ. Registration: $325 ($355 after July 1). For more info, contact ACM, 666 11th St., NW, Ste. 740, Washington, DC 20001; (202) 393-2650; www.access.tucson.org/tucson2000

Films & Tapes Wanted

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepts entries for its on-going program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length ind. film, doc & new media projects sought. The Alternative Screen, 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028; (323) 466-FILM or 461-2020 x. 117.





AXLEGREASE, Buffalo, NY cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min. on 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi-8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@pce.net

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for indep. shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to *Bijou Matinee*, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital submissions of 30 min. or less on on-going basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Artists paid honorarium & will qualify for non-exclusive distribution deals. Looking for short, narrative, alternative, anim., underground works. Works selected will, in most cases, continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings. Submit VHS/or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone no. along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Blackchair Prods., 2318 2nd Ave., PMP #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com. Unable to return submissions.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre/subject matter. Deadline: on-going. Send tapes & SASE to: The Ind. Film & Video Series, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 5th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018.

CABLE SHOWCASE SEEKS PRODUCTIONS: Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, program director, 8103 Sandy Spring Rd., Laurel, MD 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.Call: (301) 725-5300

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short European films on video for language project, preferably w/out subtitles. Limited rights only. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880.

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING FILM PROGRAM, hosted by Film Society of Lincoln Center, is currently seeking original films or videos, from 1-20 min., to include w/ monthly screenings of open-captioned featured films at Walter Reade Theater. Films w/ artistic involvement from deaf artists preferred, but not required. Seeking original work that can be understood by deaf audience—dialogue must be subtitled. Send 1/2" video copy to The Film Society of Lincoln Center, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Film Program, 165 W. 65th St., 4th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; sbensman@dti.net

DOCUMENTAL: doc & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka (310) 306-7330.

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 99/00 SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan Univ., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FIREWATER FILMS, the only year-round short film series in NYC, seeks short film submissions (cats: narrative, doc., animation & experimental). Films are shown on both VHS & 16mm formats at the Big Top Theater. Firewater Films, Box 20039, NY, NY 10025-1510; (212) 414-5419; fax: 724-8190; www.firewaterfilms.com

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return). (310) 313-6935.

FREE VIDEO RECORDING: Open call to independent artists for Promote Art Works Inc.'s "Spontaneous Combustion" series, which airs monthly on Brooklyn Community Access Television. All fields; dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater will be entertained. No works in progress accepted. Quality videotapes also accepted for editing. Call Kathleen at (718) 797-3116.

FUNNY SHORTS requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film/video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & pros welcome. Cash & prizes awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returned. Send VHS entries to: Funny Shorts, c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184.

INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION: cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic erotic, subversive, animation & underground works for inclusion in the fall season. Controversial, uncensored & subversive material encouraged. We guarantee exposure in NYC area. Contact: Edmund Varuolo c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, experimental & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218.

MAKOR continues its on-going series showcasing the work of emerging Jewish filmmakers. Now accepting shorts, features, docs and/or works-in-progress for screening consideration and network building. Program sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact Ken Sherman: (212) 601-1021; ken.sherman@makor.org

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for on-going opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 admin. fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126; www.newyorkfilmbuffs.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. long considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature, plus brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

P.O.V., PBS's award-winning showcase of independent, nonfiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of indep. nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds.

Submission deadline for 2001 season: July 31; (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of exper. video based in Portland, OR, promotes exper., abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

POTHOLE PICTURES, a revitalized 450 seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series—a showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length/genre. Connection to New England whether thru subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers helpful but not necessary. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com

ROGUE VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION seeks video shows. VHS & S-VHS OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon Univ., RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

THE SHORT LIST; showcase for American & int'l shorts, airs nat'ly on PBS stations. Pays $100/min. All genres, 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced in association w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards 5 Kodak product grants annually to selected filmmakers on series. Submit on VHS. For appl., send SASE to: Jack Ofield, Director, The Production Center, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; www.theshortlist.com; ShortList@ mail.sdsu.edu

SHORT TV; cable network entirely dedicated to short films, produced & directed by today's emerging independent filmmakers. Short TV broadcasts in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia & Detroit to around 2 million households. To submit your film, visit www.shorttv.com. For more info, call: (212) 226-6258.

TV/HOME VIDEO production company seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films on VHS or S-VHS to: Salt City Prods./Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13320; SCVP@aol.com

UNQUOTE TV: Weekly nonprofit program in its 10th yr dedicated to exposing innovative work of all genres. Produced at DUTV-Cable 54 & cablecast nat'ly. Send to: Unquote TV c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. 9B/4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS for local TV. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ aud. feedback. VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

ZAO, new exhib. space, currently accepting short film/videos of any genre/subject. Send VHS tape w/ bio & SASE to: Tahari, ZAO, 1114 6th Ave, NY, NY 10036, Attn: Lisa Schroeder.

Publications

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions avail. in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp. & NY State Dept. of Taxation & Finance, 51-pg reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & TV Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., NY, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369

THE JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeks written reviews of University Film & Video Association member films for possible inclusion in journal—send approx. 5 double-spaced pages to: Temple University, Dept. of Film & Media Arts, 14E Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8472; lerickson3@aol.com

Resources & Funds

8x10GLOSSY.COM: Online artists' co-op offers free listing for all actors, technicians & organizations in directory & searchable database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of bulletin board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER offers $3,000 in services for media artist grant. Two $1,500 grants of production services will go to established ind. video/film or multimedia artist, or to an emerging artist. Media Artist Grant supports by giving opportunities to individuals making films & videos throughout WA state. MAG can be used toward either 911 Media Arts workshops, 911's digital video camera & light kit, or any of their 5 editing suites. 911's suites incl. a multimedia workstation (Power Mac 9500 w/ Targa RTX compression card); nonlinear Avid MCXpress (off-line); nonlinear Avid Media Composer 8000 (on-line) & multi-format analog video editing suite. Facilities accommodate editing in the following formats: Betacam SP, DVCam, DVC Pro, DV, Hi-8, 3/4" SP, S-VHS & VHS. Deadline: June 30. To apply, contact Tim Coulter, Media Services Director (206) 682-6552; tim@911media.org; or send SASE to 911 Media Arts Center, Media Artist Grant, 117 Yale Ave N., Seattle, WA 98109.

ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM offered by California Arts Council to individual California artists involved in Performing Arts. Artists must show 10 years of previous professional experience to be eligible. Must be primary creators of their work. Matching funds not required & no specific project must be carried out w/ CAC funds. The program funds different disciplines in the following 4-year rotation cycle: 2000-2001: Media and New Genre; 2001-2002: Literature; 2002-2003: Visual Arts; 2003-2004: Performing Arts. Deadline for 2000/2001 application submission: Sept. 15. Notification of award made in early 2001. Applications avail. from June. California Arts Council, 1300 I Street, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

ARTS LINK U.S./JAPAN CREATIVE ARTISTS PROGRAM provides six-month residencies in Japan for individual creative artists in any discipline. Artists work on individual project which may incl. new work or pursuit of individual artistic goals. Fellows should also consider how Japan's cultures can influence their creative work. Applications must be postmarked by June 26. Contact: Arts Link, CEC Int'l Partners, 12 W. 31st St., NY, NY 10001; artslink@cecip.org

BAVC JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Bay Area Video Coalition Job Resource Center provides S.F. residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books & job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-5

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p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org; www.bavc.org

CA CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & to pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps, travel & similar activities necessary to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ CA Council for Humanities staff. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste. 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA: (213) 623-5993; in San Diego: (619) 232-4020; www.calhum.org

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwriting software in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents this interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Artists' foundation committed to supporting individual artists is accepting appls. Deadline: Sept. 2000. Download from www.creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ super 8, Hi-8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio incl. Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, NY, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

EASTMAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM: Colleges & Univs. in U.S. & Canada which offer a BA/BS/BFA, MA/MFA in film or film production may nominate two students for $5,000 scholarships. Deadline: June 15. For nomination form, write to: Betsy A. McLane, Int'l Doc. Association, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max. amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative, anim. & exper. projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

LATINO PUBLIC BROADCASTING looking for Latino drama, doc, comedy, satire, anim., mixed genre projects. Accepts single programs and limited series, new prods or works-in-progress. $5,000-$100,000 per project. Submit: VHS of current/past work; 2 copies of final script for dramatic projects. Lengths: 26", 56", 86". Deadline: June 2. Contact: LPB, 6777 Hollywood Blvd (Ste. 500), L.A., CA 90028; (323) 466-7110.

NAATA provides funding for independent productions of new Asian-American programs for public TV. Current calls incl. annual open call for production funding (postmarked June 2) & open call for completion funding (postmarked Sept. 29). Appl. or info write: NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St. 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814 x.104; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES (NYCH) offers Major Project Grants to support public events on humanities topics for audiences throughout the state. Programs funded by NYCH take many forms: conferences, lecture series, panels, symposia, reading & discussion programs, museum exhibits, film series, radio productions, on-line exhibitions & walking tours. Common denominator in all Council-sponsored projects is an emphasis upon "the humanities." Major Project Grants range btwn. $2,500-15,000. Deadline: Nov. 1. Download appl. & guidelines at www.culturefront.org/culturefront/nych/grants/; hum@echonyc.com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS' Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $5,000 in funds for distribution of recently completed independent media arts projects by NY artists. Open to audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work & installation art. Deadline: June 30. For more info: NYSCA-EMF Program, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; (212) 387-7058; fax: 387-7168; cmeyer@nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

OPEN CALL 2K: ITVS considers proposals for new innovative programs of standard broadcast length for public television on on-going basis. ITVS seeks provocative, spellbinding stories from diverse points of view & diverse communities. No finished works. Projects in any genre (comedy, satire, anim., drama, doc, exper., short) or stage of development will be considered. Programs should break traditional molds of exploring cultural, political, social, or economic issues, take creative risks, or give voice to those not usually heard. Deadline: Sept. 15. Download applications & guidelines at www.itvs.org; Contact: (415) 356-8383, x. 232; Beky_Hayes@itvs.pbs.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadlines: May 15 & Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; www.pacificpioneerfund.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE w/ 55¢ stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post production services at discounted rates. For rate card & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-9991; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

TEXAS FILMMAKERS' PRODUCTION FUND 2000: annual grant awarded to emerging film & video artists in state of Texas. In Sept. the fund will award $50,000 in grants ranging from $1,000-$5,000 to regionally produced projects. Deadline: July 1. Appl. avail. at Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund, 3109 North IH-35, Austin, TX 78722; (512) 322-0145; www.austinfilm.org

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on on-going basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Nonprofit Incorporation & Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

WOMEN IN FILM/DALLAS SCHOLARSHIP GRANT FUND awards tuition scholarships & project grants in following cats: (1) $500 tuition scholarship: qualified graduating senior entering accredited TX college or university whose major or primary field of study is film & video. Deadline: June 30. (2) $1,000 tuition scholarship: qualified applicant currently enrolled in college, university or school whose major or primary field of study is film & video. Deadline: June 15. (3) $2,000 project completion funds: qualified applicant for specific purpose of financing senior film or video project or graduate thesis project in film or video. Deadline: June 1. Successful applicants notified by mail no later than Aug. 15. Applicant must have or have had maintained permanent residence in TX & consistently maintained 3.0 average on a 4.0 scale. For additional info or to obtain appl. package: Women in Film/Dallas, Topaz Award & Scholarship Office, 2600 Stemmons Freeway, Ste. 117, Dallas, TX 75207; (214) 954-4488; fax: 954-0004; wifdal@nkn.net

IN TODAY'S INDEPENDENT FILM MARKET THERE'S NO TIME FOR SLOW BUILDS. WITH THIS IN MIND "ON VIEW" OFFERS SHAMLESS PLUGS FOR CURRENT RELEASES AND NATIONAL BROADCASTS OF INDEPENDENT FILMS AND VIDEOS IN THE HOPE THAT YOU'LL SUPPORT THEM. WHO KNOWS—MAYBE THEY'LL DO THE SAME FOR YOU SOMEDAY.



Not camera shy: Director Christine Fugate with porn star Stacy Valentine, from *The Girl Next Door.*

THEATRICAL

American Pimp (June 9, 7th Art Releasing) The Hughes Brothers, best known for fiction films about urban life (*Menace II Society, Dead Presidents*), now turn their camera on the purveyors of the world's oldest profession. Their documentary explores the origin of pimping, the inimitable flashy style of dress, and the cultural niche pimping has carved in movies and media (mis)representation. How they got started in "the game" and keep their "bitches" in line are just a few of the questions addressed in candid interviews with real pimps from coast to coast.

Groove (June 9, Sony Pictures Classics) Taking the *American Graffiti, Dazed and Confused* approach to capturing a generation, this new film by writer/director Greg Harrison brings you a night in the life of an underground San Francisco rave. From the organizers and the dedicated party-minded rave kids to the DJs themselves, the film mixes their numerous tales of woe and discovery to a contagious ambient/techno/jungle soundtrack. The film boasts appearances by DJs Polliwog and the incomparable John Digweed as themselves.

Getting to Know You (beginning June 28 at NYC's Film Forum) Lisanne Skyler's episodic film was adapted from the short stories of Joyce Carol Oates, weaving the individual tales around a central story starring *Welcome to the Dollhouse*'s Heather Matarazzo. She meets a talkative young stranger while waiting in a bus station. Listening to him spin tales about the station's denizens, she attempts to reconcile the complications in her own life.

The Girl Next Door (opening in a dozen cities throughout June, Indican Pictures) From *Boogie Nights* to Annabel Chong, porn has never been a more acceptable guilty pleasure. The attraction/repulsion of the much maligned "art" is examined in this new documentary about porn superstar Stacy Valentine. Stacy Baker was an Oklahoma housewife who left her husband and found the porn world a liberating place, where she got power and hefty paychecks as Valentine. Director Christine Fugate follows Stacy as she deals with fame, sculpts her body via surgery, and tries to maintain a romantic relationship with another porn actor.

Luminarias (early June, New Latin Pictures) Adapted from a hit stage production of the Latino Theater Company, writer Evelina Fernandez explores the complexities, prejudices, and frustration of four Latinas trying to navigate the treacherous crosscultural dating scene. The film, directed by the writer's husband Jose Luis Valenzuela, follows the quartet of professional women as they deal with others' racism as well as their own, facing up to the debates, desires, and deception of modern romance.

TELEVISION

King Gimp (June 5, HBO) Folks watching the Oscars can rarely recall the winner of Documentary Short, though this year proved the exception. Dan Keplinger, subject of William Whiteford and Susan Hannah's *King Gimp*, was barely able to contain his excitement after the award was announced. Keplinger suffers from cerebral palsy, but the disease hasn't hindered his spirit or prevented him from becoming an accomplished painter. The filmmakers followed Dan from age 12 to 25, charting his struggle to to express himself through art. On the HBO website [www.hbo.com] beginning May 23, visitors can view Keplinger's paintings and have an opportunity to correspond with the artist.

Our House (June, PBS, check local listings) Producer/director Meema Spadola grew up in a small town; his mother was gay and Spadola knew no one else with a gay parent. Presented in conjunction with Gay Pride Month, Spadola's doc features interviews with five families and reveals the unique, but wildly differing experiences of growing up with a gay parent.

The Lathe of Heaven (June, PBS, check local listings) Finally, the sci-fi classic from 1980, *The Lathe of Heaven*, is being re-presented on public TV. In addition to being a gripping two-hour adaptation of Ursula Le Guin's novel and one of public TV's most requested programs, *The Lathe of Heaven* features far-out video effects co-created by the late video artist Ed Emshwiller.

—SCOTT CASTLE

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www.aivf.org

EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.). AIVF events require advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, AmEx, or Mastercard or mail a check or money order. Your check must be received one week prior to event to reserve your seat. Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.

Please Note: reservations are required for all AIVF events, unless otherwise noted. Due to space limitations, we will hold all reserved seats until 5 minutes before the event, upon which unclaimed seats will be given to walk-ins.

The followings details were being confirmed at press time. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

June Events

AFTER HOURS
MEMBER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE

When: Every first Wed. (**June 7**), from 6-9 p.m. Library open from 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Where: Resource Library, AIVF office
Cost: free to members and nonmembers. No RSVP required.

Every first Wednesday of the month, join us for AIVF's Member Open House and Extended Resource Library Hours. Our Filmmaker Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories and trade magazines to sample grant proposals and budgets. After Hours is also the perfect time to pick up the latest version of the AIVF Member Benefits list, or ask questions about your membership. The Filmmakers Resource Library will be open from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. on Wed. June 7 and is free to all. No reservations necessary.

MEET & GREET
TAPESTRY INTERNATIONAL

When: Tues., **June 20**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free to members/$10 general public

Since 1987, Tapestry International has been distributing high quality specialty television programming to the international market, and is known as a home for the work of independents. Successful programs include *A Perfect Candidate*, *Before You Go*, and *The Need for Speed*. Tapestry also has a production entity that has produced original programming for HBO (*King Gimp*), Discovery Channel (*On the Inside*), and TLC (*Critical Incident*).



Stranger with a Camera's Elizabeth Barrett

SAVE THE DATE!
AIVF ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING

When: Friday, **June 16**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: TBA; see www.aivf.org

Join staff and members of the AIVF board for our Annual Membership Meeting. Hear about new programs and services, and provide your input as to how our 25-year-old organization can best continue to serve film- & videomakers on a national scale. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm!

PREVIEW & DISCUSSION
IN CONJUNCTION WITH *P.O.V.* AND ITS BROADCAST OF *STRANGER WITH A CAMERA*

Details pending at press time. Visit www.aivf.org for complete information!

P.O.V., public television's award-winning independent nonfiction film series, and AIVF are proud to announce a partnership in support of the national *P.O.V.* broadcast of Elizabeth Barret's *Stranger with a Camera*, Tuesday, July 11 at 10 p.m. ET on PBS.

Select AIVF salons will be invited to host sneak preview screenings and discussions of *Stranger*, as a means to engage filmmakers and local community members in a discussion of some of the important issues raised by this program.

Stranger with a Camera follows the effect of the 1967 murder of filmmaker Hugh O'Connor on the Appalachian community. O'Connor was in the area during the War on Poverty gathering images for a film and was killed by landowner Hobart Ison. Barret turns the story of this tragic confrontation into an interrogation of the media itself and its relationship to public knowledge and private dignity as well as a meditation on Appalachia's place in the American imagination.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS
HRW*IFF*
THE HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
JUNE 14–29 AT THE WALTER READE THEATRE

The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival is the world's leading showcase for distinguished fiction, documentary, and animated films and videos that incorporate human rights themes. The festival presents works that give a human face and personal viewpoints to threats against political and individual freedom.

Join AIVF as we co-present ***Showdown in Seattle: Five Days That Shook the WTO*** on Wed. June 14: 1 p.m.; Thurs. June 15: 6:15 p.m.; Sat. June 17: 1 p.m. *Showdown* producer and AIVF Board member DeeDee Halleck will lead a Q&A at the Thurs. and Sat. screenings.

For further info visit www.aivf.org or www.hrw.org

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL LATINO FILM FESTIVAL AIVF CO-PRESENTS FOCUS ON TRUTH

When: Friday, **June 2**, 1-2:30 p.m.
Where: Tinker Auditorium (22 E. 60th St)
Cost: free. No rsvp necessary.

What roles do objectivity and perspective have in documentary film? What are the social and political significances of documenting Latino stories? This panel of documentarians looks at the values and techniques of today's Latino documentary storytelling. For more info check out www.aivf.org or www.nylatinofilm.com

DOCFEST, MAY 31-JUNE 5 AIVF CO-SPONSORS PANEL DISCUSSIONS AT DOCFEST WEEKEND, JUNE 3-4

The New York International Documentary Film Festival (a presentation of the New York Documentary Center) is an annual noncompetitive event to celebrate and promote the documentary art form. This year's fest will present a new Awards Ceremony along with regular screenings at the DGA Theatre. AIVF members receive 20% off festival passes. For more info: see www.aivf.org or www.docfest.org.

LAKE PLACID FILM FORUM, JUNE 8-11 AIVF CO-SPONSORS SELF-DISTRIBUTION PANEL

When: Sat., **June 10**, 3:45 p.m.
Where: Lake Placid Film Forum, Lake Placid, NY
Info: www.lakeplacid-film-forum.org

OCULARIS OPEN REEL

When: Monday, **June 26**, 7 p.m. 'til late
Where: Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St. in Brooklyn; (718) 388-8713
Cost: Free

OPEN REEL is an extension of the Ocularis weekly forum for the support and exhibition of works by local filmmakers with a focus on new and emerging work of all genres. Inclusion in this Open Reel program is on a first come-first served basis. Work should be submitted by June 18 for consideration, there is no entry fee, and works will be shown on 16mm, super 8, and video. Filmmakers outside of NYC welcome—as long as you can attend the event. Submission details on www.aivf.org or www.ocularis.org

VARIETY presents **ShowBiz Expo**

VARIETY SHOWBIZ EXPO, JUNE 23-25, LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER

Come visit AIVF at booth #2062! Members get free admission to main exhibition hall; for complimentary VIP pass, call: (323) 871-8554 before June 16. AIVF will also present panel discussions on June 24; visit www.aivf.org for details.

SELECT SCREENINGS AT WALTER READE THEATER, PRESENTED BY THE FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members may attend specific film series at discounted prices. Please show membership card at box office. The Walter Reade Theatre is located at Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th Street at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

June 2-8: "American Independent Visions" (co-presented with the Independent Feature Project): David Williams' *Thirteen*

June 14-29: Human Rights Watch International Film Festival

Coming in July

In Los Angeles, AIVF co-presents panels at Outfest, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, July 6-16.

In New York, AIVF co-presents a discussion with George Kuchar at the 2000 New York Video Festival, July 21-27!

CALL FOR AIVF BOARD NOMINATIONS

On June 19th AIVF will begin accepting nominations for the AIVF board of directors!

Board members are elected to a 3-year term; the board gathers 4 times per year for weekend-long meetings. We have an active board; members must be prepared to spend time at and between meetings to fulfill board responsibilities, which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and participation by email & conference calls in interim;
- Preparation for meetings by reading/preparing advance materials;
- Active participation in one or more committee areas as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by the board chair or executive director;
- General support of executive board and staff;
- Commitment to the organization's efforts toward financial stability.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members (i.e. with dues paid in full at date of nomination); you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old and AIVF members in good standing (i.e. dues paid in full throughout period of elections, and, if elected, throughout term).

To make a nomination, email name, address, and phone number of nominee and nominator to elect@aivf.org or fax to: (212) 463-8519. No nominations accepted via phone. Nominations due at the AIVF offices or in the email box by 6 p.m. eastern standard time, Friday Sept. 1.

www.aivf.org

AIVF has greatly expanded our services for independent makers and advocacy for the media arts field via our web resource, www.aivf.org. Exciting improvements include:

> New site design and layout, presenting more resource that are easier to navigate

> All-new community forums, providing the opportunity to engage with members, as well as with AIVF staff and board, on a wide variety of topics and issues

> New information services, including Funder and Distributor FAQs and comprehensive "tip sheets" on subjects such as fiscal sponsorship, music clearances, and much more

> An expanded and up-to-date media advocacy area, providing information on important issues and a portal to our advocacy partners.

Note that some areas are protected for AIVF members only. To access these areas, you will need to provide your membership number ("NAME") and your 5-digit zip code ("PASSWORD").

For questions, suggestions, or commendations, contact joshua@aivf.org

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SPOTLIGHT ON AIVF SALONS

Fostering national activity, growth, and development.

BY ELIZABETH PETERS

AIVF IS ALL ABOUT PROVIDING THE INFRASTRUCture that allows independent media artists to *stay* independent. One of the broadest programs we offer to this end is the AIVF Regional Salons: dedicated to supporting not only individual film- and videomakers, but also independent media communities.

The majority of resources for making media are massed on the coasts, which causes an unfortunate migration of talent from regional communities to the production centers of New York and Los Angeles. Regional salons offer a peer-to-peer opportunity to share and strengthen community resources, with the goal of allowing independents to work and grow professionally without leaving home!

Regional salons are not chapters of AIVF and are not administered by our national office. They are instead partnerships with members who wish to harness some of their own passion and experience in order to aggregate and foster their local communities. Each salon grows and evolves in response to the needs and strengths of its region. As a result, salons take many forms, including those illustrated in the following profiles.

Over the past year, AIVF has formalized information sharing for and between salons. We now provide a salon start-up kit, which includes a guide to leading salons, a review of lessons learned, and sample resource kits for building meetings around specific topics. We also undertake the initial outreach to AIVF members when a new salon is started. Salon leaders share an ongoing listserve, allowing them to support each other by sharing questions, information, and models. AIVF collects information on salon activity, allowing a national profile of a broad variety of communities.

Changes in technology offer new opportunities for individuals to own the tools of production and distribution, no matter where they live and work. Which leaves the often overlooked, yet critical, link of preserving local production and exhibition communities. AIVF salons offer a response to this challenge.

As someone who cut her teeth as a volunteer for BF/VF in Boston, then worked in partnership with a number of groups that sparked the explosion of the independent community in Austin, I have seen how powerful the results can be when media artists work together to organize resources. I encourage you to support your local salon, or consider starting one in your own community!

Elizabeth Peters is executive director of AIVF and publisher of The Independent.

HELP WANTED

Seeking regionally based indies to foster local media communities. Must be informed, organized, and passionate; with the ability to take a leadership role while sharing responsibilities. Remuneration: the opportunity to connect with others of your kind, while building a thriving resource for local artists and audiences.

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THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: one year's subscription to The Independent • access to group insurance plans • discounts on goods and services from national Trade Partners • online and over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars, screenings, and events • book discounts • classifieds discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members-only web services.

DUAL MEMBERSHIP

All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household, except for the year's subscription to The Independent which is shared by both.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY/NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP

All the above benefits (except access to insurance plans) • option to request up to 3 one-year subscriptions to The Independent • representative may vote and run for board of directors • discounts on display advertising • special mention in each issue of The Independent.

LIBRARY/UNIVERSITY SUBSCRIPTION

Year's subscription to The Independent for multiple readers.

JOIN AIVF TODAY!

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Individual	☐ $55/1 yr.	☐ $100/2 yrs.
Dual	☐ $95/1 yr.	☐ $180/2 yrs.
Student	☐ $35/1 yr. (enclose copy of current student ID)	
Business & Industry	☐ $150/1 yr.	
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SUBSCRIPTION RATE

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MAILING RATES

Magazines are mailed second-class in the U.S.

- ☐ First-class U.S. mailing - add $30
- ☐ Canada - add $18
- ☐ Mexico - add $20
- ☐ All other countries - add $45

* Your additional, tax-deductible contribution will help support the educational programs of the Foundation for Independent Video and Film, a public 501(c)(3) organization.

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Mail to AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl, NY, NY 10013; or charge by phone (212) 807-1400 x 236, by fax (212) 463-8519, or via our website www.aivf.org. Your first issue of The Independent will arrive in 4-6 weeks.

HOW TO START A SALON

BY LATRICE DIXON

FIND others who share your enthusiasm and dedication in creating a support base for independent media makers and discuss the possibilities and goals of a local salon.

SEEK OUT local media organizations or institutions you may want to partner with. There are many resources in your community you don't want to overlook.

DEVISE specific topics for the first 3-4 meetings. Solicit ideas from AIVF's Director of Information Services and Programming and other salon leaders. Over the long term, establish relationships with local festivals, film societies, museums, universities, or other institutions that may conduct screenings and panels for additional programming ideas. Brainstorming sessions among members are useful.

LOCATE a centrally located space and set a time. This can be one of your biggest challenges. Do your homework. Visit coffee houses, bookstores, media arts organizations, bars, community centers, libraries, lofts, and industry vendors. Make sure the space can accommodate the needs of the group. Is it big enough, do they have enough chairs, can you carry on a conversation?

CREATE a catchy name. Make up fliers with interesting graphics to get people's attention. AIVF will help with an initial mailing to local AIVF members. Get a group together to distribute fliers wherever mediamakers will find them: Kinko's, screening rooms, pizza shops, post houses, arts organizations. Let local foundations, funders, art councils know who you are and what the group is doing.

PUT out notification in local newsletters, newspapers, or through email broadcasts.

PREPARE an agenda for each meeting. Don't run over two hours. No one has a lot of free time and if people perceive the meetings will drag on, they won't come.

ASSESS members' needs during the first meeting. Have everyone in the room identify themselves and talk about their work or interest in media. This will give folks an idea of who they are sitting next to. Pass around a sign-in sheet to collect contact information, including email. This is a good time to delegate responsibilities. Ask someone to take notes and prepare them for next meeting. Always try to leave time for networking.

THINK broadly. Find out what people are interested in, what resources they have access to, what skills they possess. Your salon members are your greatest resource.

DELEGATE. Delegate. Delegate. Running a salon is a tough job. It will require a collective effort to run efficiently and with continuity. At one time or another every member will have outside responsibilities that will draw them away. In order to maintain continuity, rotate the meetings' chairs.

DEVELOP a focused mission. What service can the salon provide to your independent media community? Down the road, plan a yearly calendar that supports this mission.

REMEMBER: running a salon is an opportunity to build long-term relationships with individuals, businesses, and organizations in your community that can and will support you.

LaTrice Dixon is AIVF's Membership Director

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.

See the regional salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m.
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 p.m.
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422; dot@inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew-Lee, lee@aivf.org

SALONS

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wed. of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, (414) 276-8563; www.mifs.org/salon

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668; dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact AIVF for further information.

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; rmondar1@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

LINCOLN, NE

NEBRASKA'S NIFTY NIFP

BY LORI MAASS VIDLAK

IT WAS A COLD AFTERNOON IN THE WINTER OF 1991. Three independent documentary filmmakers—John Spence, Mel Bucklin, and I—sat around Spence's wooden kitchen table in Lincoln, Nebraska, clutching beer bottles and venting our frustrations about the difficulties of finding reliable fiscal sponsorship for our projects. Between swills and sighs, we crafted a plan. Why not create our own 501(c)(3) organization to support local independent filmmaking? After all, how tough could it be? Surely no more difficult than making documentaries about fine art in a state where the majority of residents seemed only interested in college football. And so it was that Nebraska Independent Film Projects, Inc. (NIFP) was born.

Nine years later, NIFP is much different than first envisioned. It still offers the potential of fiscal sponsorship for its members, but it also sponsors production workshops, treats the public to fun-filled "Mad Movie Nights" showcasing short films, maintains an expanding web site, and communicates regularly with a 60-member email newsgroup sharing local and national film and video information.

Today's monthly NIFP meetings are part of the AIVF Salon network. NIFP became a part of the salons about three years ago when group interest was ebbing and the organization saw the value of connecting with a larger pool of independents. Salon meetings now draw many more and varied personalities than they once did. About 20 members attend each month, compared to an average attendance of 4-8 during the organization's early years. This new group includes junior high, high school, and college students and teachers, professionals from the Lincoln and Omaha film and video industry, the state film officer, video and sound professionals from the public TV station, a UPS in-house video producer who is shooting his own dramatic short, a financial advisor who is writing several screenplays, a former production designer with a checkered film past and aspirations to produce and direct, and four 20-something funny guys who have formed their own production company and turn out some impressive shorts made (literally) on a beer budget.

Meetings, which were held for years in the public TV station conference room and then rotated among a variety of local restaurants, have finally found a home in the spacious studio of Telepro, a local video production house. This new location accommodates the burgeoning attendance and facilitates screenings of members' finished works or works-in-progress. These screenings have become a regular feature of the monthly salons, as have appearances by guests from the production industry, shared words of encouragement, family-sized bags of licorice, and twelve-packs.



A recent NIFP gathering, including cofounder John Spence (standing far right).

An active board led by an energetic and over-achieving president is currently planning a short-film/video contest open only to Nebraskans to encourage members to commit their visions to the big or small screen. Finalists will have their work exhibited locally and featured on a video reel to showcase production talent in the state. In addition, the winner will pocket a cool 300 bucks. Sponsors for the contest are being sought nationally.

Throughout its evolution, NIFP occasionally teetered on the brink of extinction. One contentious early meeting pitted a small group of academics who thought fiscal sponsorship too risky against the producers who founded the organization primarily for that purpose. Ultimately, the producers won, but the argument led to the development of a rigorous fiscal sponsorship application process. To date, the organization has sponsored only two productions, but they were both completed as promised and have helped NIFP gain credibility among state foundations and other grant-giving organizations.

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As with most all-volunteer groups, a few dedicated (or stupid) souls often did the majority of work for the whole membership. In early years, a quarterly newsletter consumed a large amount of time and effort, as did grant writing to support the organization's other limited activities. In 1997, the group sponsored a Saturday workshop with Nebraska native and UCLA screenwriting department chair Lew Hunter that drew over 100 aspiring and professional writers. The success of that effort put enough money in the coffers to hire a part-time staff person to help relieve the burdens of a burned-out volunteer board. Without that staff person, the organization might have folded. Instead, it got a new shot of steam.

Dorothy Booraem, the current NIFP president, got initiated into the organization by working as that part-time staffer and in the process cleaned up the group's records, built a database, started the web site, and organized an audio workshop with L.A. sound expert Fred Ginsburg. Because of Dorothy's work, some long-time board members were finally able to take a needed respite without guilt, and when they returned, they were ready to join Dorothy in pointing the organization in new directions.

Of the three original founders of NIFP, two are still active members. I am vice-president and John is treasurer. Mel joined the staff of the local public TV station a few years ago and is no longer active with the group. Still, all three of us are proud of what NIFP has become. It's definitely not the same organization we started around that kitchen table nine years ago; it's more fun, more diverse, and growing stronger every day.

Lori Maass Vidlak is a writer/producer whose most recent documentary is Raising Grandkids: a love story. *She is contemplating a leap into dramatic film production because she has a short memory, a high tolerance for pain, and an increased credit limit.*

MILWAUKEE, WI

OLD MILWAUKEE—AND NEW

BY DAN WILSON

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED MOVING IMAGES. FROM THE day I'd first dragged my father's 8mm camera out of the attic, I was enraptured. So after attempting a degree in architecture (and failing miserably when I realized I couldn't pass physics to save my life), I graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a BFA in Film. After graduation, I stuck around the area, getting involved with the local public access channel, buying a couple of 16mm cameras, and supporting my film habit by an assortment of day jobs and freelance assignments.

I gradually became acquainted with Milwaukee's disparate media groups. The production community is polarized into small pockets of individuals who may or may not share information and resources with each other. The art students use film and video experimentally and as a means of self-expression. The community activists expose government corruption via the local public access channel. There's a very strong industrial production market, with crews shooting commercials and training films day after day. The independent writer/directors are (as always) struggling to raise money outside traditional Hollywood channels.

I found myself working with each group over the years and discovered that, for the most part, each one kept to itself. Once in a while, a graduate of the art school would 'sell out' and go be a staff director for an ad agency, or an industrial shooter would surprise everyone by suddenly having a major investor for a script he'd written and wanted to direct. But generally their paths never crossed.

Milwaukee's fragmentation became clear to me one day when I responded to a Crew Wanted ad in the newspaper. To this day, it amazes me every time I think of it. I called and got the time, date, and place for the informational meeting, then showed up to find a room full of 65 people I'd never met before, all excited to be involved with an independent feature film being produced by recent graduates of the local technical college.

Shortly after that meeting, it occurred to me: Through my meandering between public access, the university, the commercial production companies, and the indies, I knew of some guys on one end of town who'd just purchased an Eclair NPR, and some other people who were investing in portable DAT recorders and microphones. I knew of yet others who were amassing a basement full of lights to support their personal projects. If only the guys with the camera knew about the guys with the DAT and the garage full of lighting gear.

The Milwaukee Independent Film Society (MIFS) was a natural result. Our goal was to create a neutral ground where anyone could show up, share information, and meet like-minded people in the community—no matter which community you were from: the university, the public access station, the lone artist. All were welcome, and we believed that everyone had something to share and contribute.

We incorporated as a membership organization in early 1998, selected a board of directors who would represent the various segments of the community we were trying to reach, and negotiated discounts with providers of production supplies around the country. We got a number of local film- and videomakers to donate work to a benefit screening for the society, had about 25 people join that evening, and suddenly had some money with which to fund the organization.

The next few months were a whirlwind of activity. MIFS filed for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, built our mailing list, and continued to have screenings, seminars, and a quarterly newsletter. Currently, MIFS maintains a stable paid membership of 60-70 individuals, and we have a mailing list of nearly 1,000 individuals interested in independent film and video production. We have a handful of dedicated volunteers and volunteer board members who oversee the day-to-day operations of the society. Naturally, a partnership with AIVF as the Milwaukee Salon was a good fit. In addition to both organizations sharing similar goals, we could provide a place for Milwaukee AIVF members to get together and network and the affiliation would increase MIFS' credibility.

We're well on our way to becoming a place where area producers can network, share information and resources among like-minded people, and build a real sense of community. We look forward to many years as Milwaukee's AIVF Salon, and many years serving the local production community.

Dan Wilson is an independent producer living and working in Milwaukee. He is the founder and current president of the Milwaukee Indepedent Film Society.

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ALBANY, NY

UPSTATE UPSTARTS

BY MIKE CAMOIN

IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT I RECEIVED a letter from AIVF inviting members to form a salon network. In March '95, we held our first meeting in a small cafe, competing with garage bands in the background and the pessimism that we would not amount to much more than a club.

Recently our little AIVF-Albany Salon, which we call Upstate Independents (UI), was voted the Capital Region's "Best Local Indie Film Resource." We have a paying membership of nearly 100 media artists, a not-so-quarterly newsletter, a webpage, a monthly radio program called "Indie Cafe" on www.WRPI.org, and the screenplay series Movies Without Pictures, all under the umbrella of a nonprofit organization, complete with a Board of Directors. It's amazing how far we've come in five years.



Salon leader Mike Camoin.

Part of our success stems from our location in upstate New York. The region is poor in indie resources and there are scarce examples of 'making-it' in the indie scene—so our AIVF salon was *it*.

But there are some other critical ingredients that have allowed our salon to thrive. One is Tom Mercer, vice-president of UI and founder of Movies Without Pictures, the region's only venue for screenwriters and yet-to-be-produced screenplays. Tom calls himself "a screenwriter locked in a state workers job," and his background includes working with large groups. Annually, Tom has led our salon in brainstorming the coming year and developing five-year goals. Out of these annual discussions come our group's focus and its ability to harness individual resources and ideas.

Additionally, co-founder Carol Brizzi spearheaded the task of creating a membership database, which has been dutifully updated on a bi-annual basis. Personally, I believe this 'contact sheet' is one of the salon's most valuable assets—our hidden gold. These contact sheets are at the heart of all the networking that takes place in between our monthly meetings.

In five years we've gone from three members to 50 to now just under 100, each of whom pays $15 annually to receive a contact sheet, the UI newsletter, and get a posting on our group's web site. And while www.upstateindependents.org has remained stagnant for some time, it will soon become the salon's primary focus, and we hope it will help streamline the task of getting people connected.

As the salon leader, I've been able to leverage our network's ability to organize our resources and form alliances with other existing groups, such as the Lake Placid Film Forum and the Saratoga Filmmakers Workshop. In both cases, our members gain quick access to influential industry leaders like Steve Greenwald, president of Audrey Cohen College in New York City. Ultimately, our efforts help theirs and vice versa. The end result is more independent filmmaking activity in upstate New York.

Above all, camaraderie is the glue that holds our activities together—and sustains us personally . . . Some leave the region, but the ties remain. Without a springboard like an AIVF salon, I seriously doubt anyone would be taking such personal risks at later stages in life.

Initially, the salon operated with an informal steering committee, while I organized the monthly meetings, the agenda, and so on. Some members hinted at forming a Board of Directors, which screenwriter/attorney Rich Redlo knew something about. Rich helped establish UI as a not-for-profit in 1998. This status serves primarily to protect our group from any lawsuits, while our meetings remain entirely open to the public at Borders Books and Music in Albany.

As our group grew, I naturally became overwhelmed—and I've spoken with other salon leaders in similar positions. To ease this burden, I delegated the leadership of our monthly meetings to individual board members and volunteers. This one move has led to our salon's major growth and expansion in the past two years. It has also widened our contacts for program guests. Some of the most energizing monthly meetings have included such industry guests as Ralph Arlyck, Mark DeGaspree, Bob Hawk, and John Pierson.

Each leader develops his or her own monthly program, which slips into a regular meeting format designed by the board. In addition, members are now given a chance to speak at each meeting during "project updates" if they need help immediately. We've even designated an official time-keeper to ensure that our meetings end on time.

Above all, camaraderie is the glue that holds our activities together—and sustains us personally. Among the great things I've witnessed are the moves members make to further their filmmaking careers, maybe letting go of a full-time or part-time job to pursue these more passionate endeavors. Some leave the region, but the ties remain. Without a springboard like an AIVF salon, I seriously doubt anyone would be taking such personal risks at later stages in life.

Recently, a member announced she had received her first acting role in a professional production—it was a non-speaking part, yet she was so excited she baked two boxes of chocolate chip cookies to share at our networking break. If this is any indication of the kind of spirit at the rest of the salons, I'm certain they're filling a much needed void in many regions across the U.S.

Mike Camoin [mike@videosforchange.com], president of Upstate Independents, Inc. will be stepping down from his five-year post in October to work on a feature film, Grazing.

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BOULDER/DENVER, CO

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ACTIVISM

BY JON STOUT

ON A CRISP JANUARY NIGHT IN DOWNTOWN Boulder, chants of "This is what democracy looks like!" rattled storefront windows and post-Christmas shoppers. Down the Pearl Street Mall paraded a pack of drummers, dancers, and flyer-wielding protesters, led by three 15-foot puppets of corporate-mashing monsters. Their destination: the Boulder Theater, where an eager line already stretched around the block beneath a marquee that beamed *K.O. the WTO Celebration! The Spirit of Seattle UNCENSORED.*

When the "Sold Out!" sign finally went up, the 800-plus folks lucky enough to make it inside cozied up to the bar, looking around for friends and open seats. Others gathered information or signed petitions at tables set up by local activists. Many exchanged stories fresh from Seattle, where they and 50,000 others had just made history with their protests. This was, after all, their night. It was also the January installment of the Boulder/Denver AIVF salon, a monthly screening series of activist videos.

Topping the evening's bill was *Showdown in Seattle: Five Days That Shook the WTO*, a grassroots look at the unprecedented convergence of labor, environmental, and human rights activists that shut down the World Trade Organization Ministerial in November 1999. As pointed out in (and exemplified by) the tape, one of the biggest stories in Seattle was the impact created by media activists on the scene to provide a counterpoint to corporate media misinformation [see Media News, "5 Days Seen 'Round the World," April 2000].

The Boulder Theater event also included footage of local WTO protests, as well as a forum with activists, radical feminist performance art, music, and a colorful diatribe from spoken word artist Jello Biafra, formerly of the Dead Kennedys and currently a Green Party presidential candidate. Punk rock kids sat cross-legged in the aisles, transfixed, making mental notes about how obscure international trade policies affected them too.

Everyone left revitalized, including some older civil rights activists who thanked the organizers for shaking them out of a couple decades of complacency. The 100 available copies of *Showdown* sold out quickly, with many students promising to make their parents watch it end-to-end. It was media making a difference. And for many, it was now on to Washington DC for April's "Spank the Bank" protests at the World Bank and IMF.



"Be the media!," Jello Biafra commanded the crowd at the January WTO event. The screening series sponsored by the Boulder/Denver AIVF salon aims to help show the way.

Although this evening took on a life of its own, propelled by the energy of the students and activists returning from Seattle, its roots can be found in the monthly activist video screening series begun in November 1998 by the Boulder/Denver AIVF salon, together with Boulder's Community Television, Free Speech TV, and the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center (RMPJC). These four groups joined forces out of a shared commitment to independent media, recognizing the important social and political role it must play in an increasingly corporate-controlled environment.

Furthering this spirit of collaboration, last February the Boulder Independent Media Alliance (BIMA)—a coalition of the local alternative papers, radio stations, and broadcast entities—signed on as media sponsors for the series, offering their promotional support. BIMA formed in order to find ways of supporting each other's efforts to cover the important stories ignored by the corporate press. Toward this end, members will offer input into the screening series selection process.

Whenever possible, the groups curate the monthly programs to support local campaigns. For example, a screening of Katherine Knight's *Food for Thought* coincided with the RMPJC's letter-writing campaign to stop genetically engineered agriculture. A screening of AIVF board member Lee Lew-Lee's *All Power to the People!* was followed by a strategy session with the Prisoners' Rights Project and the Colorado Coalition for Mumia Abu Jamal. A screening series featuring Headwaters Action Network videos of California EarthFirst! actions helped stimulate discussion about a hot local topic, the FBI's harassment of area environmentalists following a multi-million dollar arson at a ski resort that was planning to expand into wildlife habitats.

Most of the series' programs are drawn from the shelves of Free Speech TV, the Boulder-based progressive television network that airs full-time via satellite on EchoStar's DISH Network and part-time via cable on 50 community access stations. Screenings are generally held at RMPJC in Boulder or on the Colorado University campus. The Boulder Public Library has hosted two screenings, and the groups have proposed moving the monthly series there, beginning this fall.

Given the topical nature of the series, each screening brings out diverse audiences. Relatively few among them are producers, but that too may be changing, partly as a result of the series. In the summer of 1999, a new group formed at the RMPJC—the Activist Media Project—to document local talks and actions for television broadcast. Since then, a dozen or so activists have been trained at Community Television, Boulder's public access station, where they now produce and air a weekly one-hour program.

"Be the media!," Jello Biafra commanded the crowd at the January WTO event. The screening series sponsored by the Boulder/Denver AIVF salon aims to help show the way.

Jon Stout is FSTV Program Director and leads the Boulder/Denver salon. For more information about the screening series, contact him at (303) 442-8445 or programming@fstv.org.

FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, and information services. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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Millennium Campaign Fund

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $105,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

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DeeDee Halleck

This column commemorates the 25th anniversary of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the June issues from the magazine's launch to the present.

"The great flaw of our culture is this adoration of technique. The myth is that through some kind of fake technical objectivity we can reach an objective statement or image of society, or even people. Untrue. Because those people caught in that second of time have history. And history is what destroys the very concept of cinema verité."

Emile De Antonio, 1982

"If we are lucky, by the year 2000 we will probably just have a solid cube, with the information stored in it and played off it: a 3-D rectangle. The camera will be a CCD camera, undoubtedly, which is a bunch of flat chips. The biggest thing on the camera will be the lens. Editors will then have random access to every single frame. When you have information stored digitally, you can change information digitally."

John J. Godfrey, 1983

"Independents have long hoped that the American Film Institute would help meet the pressing needs of their community, create new distribution outlets and nurture audience development. These are national problems. But in light of this enormous debt, can AFI afford to attend to matters beyond its campus borders?"

Debra Goldman, 1984

"Videotapes and films-on-tape can be cheaper to distribute than 16mm films, and therefore have been perceived as a threat to the 16mm print market. Many distributors have kept the price of video copies of films artificially high in order to encourage the purchase of 16mm prints."

Renee Tajima, 1985

"Why the Mac for independent producers? In two words: rampant versatility. So many more programs are learnable and features genuinely useful that the independent film or video producer is certain to exploit it more fully than other PCs."

David W. Leitner, 1986

"If there's any apparent and reasonable shared characteristics binding the otherwise diverse activities of Canada's independent filmmakers—and one that doesn't sacrifice aesthetic diversity in the name of critical convenience—it's the determination to isolate and identify cultural subjectivity."

Geoff Pevere, 1987

"When you see an innovative or hard-hitting documentary on public television, check the



source. It may very well have come from some other country's public television service, one where the mandate to produce programming on the basis of its public's need to know is taken seriously."

Pat Aufderheide, 1988

"It's not often that a documentary film produces such dramatic results. Despite the convincing case in support of Randall Adams' innocence presented in *The Thin Blue Line*, getting him off death row was neither easy nor inevitable."

Pat Thomson, 1989

"[Michael] Moore-bashing and [Spike] Lee-bashing seemed to rise and fall with their box-office grosses, much like the fluctuations in anti-Japanese opinions in relation to the rise and fall of the U.S. trade deficit. The more tickets sold, the more anxiety seemed to stir up about the potential dangers of these films. Why? Here were two hometown boys—Lee from Brooklyn and Moore from Flint—who knew their subject matter with first-hand intimacy. Perhaps too close for comfort."

Renee Tajima, 1990

"The Collective for Living Cinema was a different brand of people. They understood film. As curators they were very critical, and their programs made an artistic statement. They took risks. But then, that's probably the reason they're no longer around"

Ada Griffin, on the closing of the Collective, an 18-year-old independent film showcase, in 1991

"The real advantages of Hi-8, Doug Block says, are its low cost as an acquisition format and the ability to blend in with the crowd. 'I could never shoot some of my projects in film, because I could never get into the flow of a scene the way I can with Hi-8,' he explains."

James McBride, 1992

"With the new venues, new audiences, and new makers coming onto the scene, short and long documentaries and every other type of AIDS media will continue to proliferate until the end of the crisis. Whether broadcasters will air the most effective work remains to be seen."

Catherine Saalfield, 1995

"Delivering a devastating blow to many no-budget and experimental filmmakers, Eastman Kodak announced in February that manufacture of all super 8 sound films and one Ektachrome silent product has ceased."

Toni Treadway, 1996

"I am writing to you to advise you of my intent to continue pursuing elimination of the NEA. It would be fiscally irresponsible to continue this program, which robs the poor to entertain the rich, when other programs have a much greater claim to both need and effectiveness."

Rep. Dick Armey (R-TX) in a letter to NEA president Jane Alexander, 1997

"Sure, I could make it. But I don't think I could sell *Laws of Gravity* today. We didn't get into Sundance in a year when there were 200 submissions. Now there's 970 submissions to Sundance and every other major festival. I'm at a disadvantage with my $40,000 16mm film with no stars. The fact that we made if for forty grand was newsworthy then. Now it's not."

Larry Meistrich, 1998

"This is the first time distributing short films has actually been viable. VHS didn't work, the Internet is too slow, and CD-ROM only stores a few minutes of decent video. DVD can get filmmakers' work seen and launch their careers."

Scott Epstein, 1999

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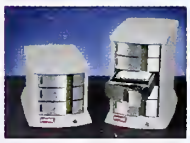


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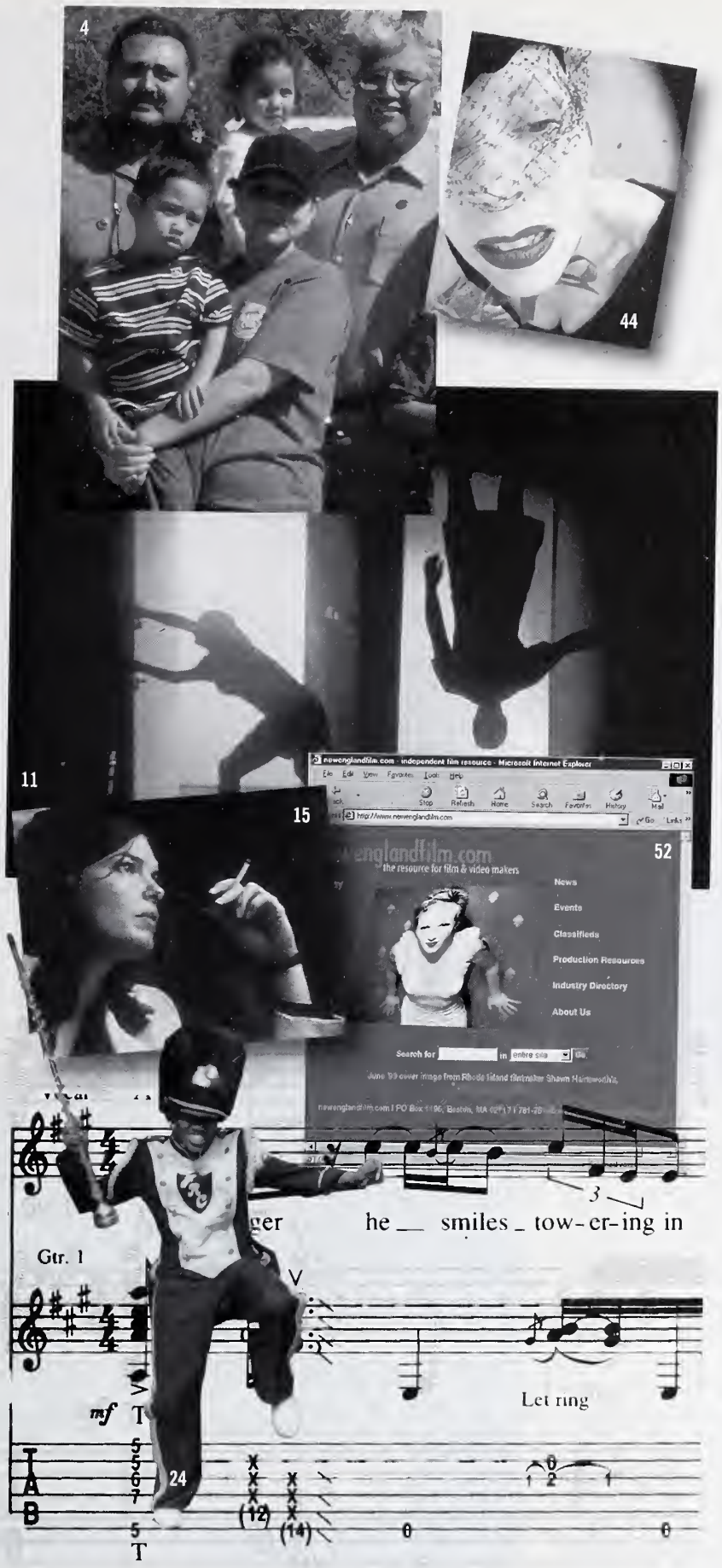
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COURTESY BARBARA GLADSTONE GALLERY

EDITED BY PAUL POWER

FED UP

California TV workers hunger strike for better pay.

BY BERNARDO RUIZ

AT A TIME WHEN MEDIA CONGLOMERATES like Disney and Time-Warner are squabbling over multi-million dollar profit margins and market share, three television employees from KFTV, a local Fresno, California affiliate of the nation's leading commercial Spanish-language network Univision, have fought an entirely different kind of battle—and won. After nearly a year of fruitless negotiations with Univision management over their low salaries, the three employees finally took their protest to the streets. Barred from discussing the details of the dispute on-air and fed up with what the employees considered insulting tactics on the part of the station management, the three station employees went on hunger strike.



Hunger strikers Reina Cardenas (front) and Martin Castellano (back left) with Paul Chavez, son of Cesar (back right), on the picket line the day management agreed to their pay demands.

The 43-day strike ended March 31—which, significantly, would have been the 73rd birthday of labor leader César Chávez. Martin Castellano, a master control operator, reporter Reina Cárdenas, and Carrie Biggs-Adams, a union negotiator who replaced anchor Fermín Chávez after he was ordered by his cardiologist to end the strike, finally ended their strike when union leaders and the station, KFTV channel 21, brokered a deal, creating the station's first-ever labor contract. These three were members of local 51 of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO (NABET-CWA), a union which represents anchors, reporters, master control operators, photographers, editors, and other production personnel.

When KFTV and NABET-CWA sat down at the bargaining table last July, the issue at hand was low wages, which station employees said were out of line with KFTV and Univision's dominance of the local market. According to union officials, journalists at comparable regional stations were earning double the salaries paid by KFTV, which controls Fresno's Spanish-language market and enjoys high ratings.

After months of fruitless negotiations commencing in May of last year, Fermín Chávez—a popular local anchor—decided to change the strategy of the strike when, in December, KFTV management sent pizzas to the picket lines. The gesture was so insulting to Fermin and the strikers that they decided to adopt one of César Chávez's most powerful but dangerous tactics: a hunger strike. The three strikers, joined by two community members, began drinking only liquids and vegetable juices.

At the time Fermín Chávez was the highest-paid worker with a yearly salary of $32,500. Cárdenas earned $25,300 for her work as a reporter, while Castellano earned $21,481 as a master control operator, even though he had 10 years on the job. They and the union were also upset over what they considered an overreliance on freelance reporters and technicians.

After nearly a month and a half of negotiations the union ratified the new labor contract. Under the new contract terms, which affects the 20-person union, Fermín Chávez's salary rose from $31,500 to $37,000, Cárdenas' from $25,300 to $28,750, and Castellano's from $21,500 to $26,500. Some raises were as much as 40% though most of the union members received increases in the 20-25% range.

The contract went further than implementing wage increases however, offering contractual coverage to freelance employees who've worked more than 90 days over a 12 month period. In addition, prior to the new terms, master control operators were required to eat on the job; now, however, they'll receive overtime pay for missing the meal. There was also an agreement that there be no repercussions to any group or individual supporting the strikers.

Although the situation has been formally resolved, the atmosphere at the station is still tense, says Cárdenas. "Do I regret it? No. In the end we feel like it was worthwhile. With our qualifications many of us could have gone somewhere else for more money. But we valued our work too much. It was a harder decision to stay and fight."

This fracas at a tiny Fresno affiliate may not make headline news, but it has quietly set the stage for future labor disputes. Broadcasters should take a cue from the protests and support for the strike (letters of support came in from England, Sweden, and Mexico) and quickly acknowledge worker demands. The outcome of the dispute has also demonstrated the increasing political clout of Latino media professionals.

"What I've learned from all of this is that Latino mediamakers will be an important majority here in California and nationwide in setting political agendas," concludes Reina Cárdenas. "We cannot be overlooked."

Bernardo Ruiz is an independent filmmaker and journalist and an intern at The Independent. *He also edits the bilingual journal* The Broadsheet/La Hoja Grande *[www.quintaraza.com].*

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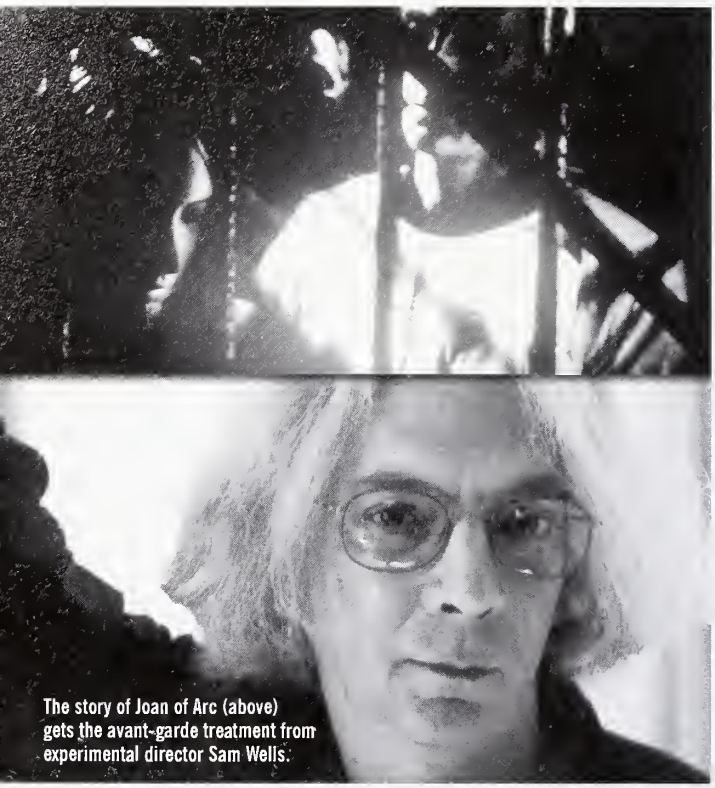
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WIRED ANGEL

BY SABINA DANA PLASSE



The story of Joan of Arc (above) gets the avant-garde treatment from experimental director Sam Wells.

THE AMERICAN AVANT-GARDE CINEMA IS alive and well if you know where to find it. But who would think to look toward the legend of Joan of Arc or the myth of Orpheus?

Experimental filmmaker Sam Wells did. His latest work, *Wired Angel*, is a 90-minute version of Joan of Arc that has been plugged-in and recalibrated. This "Daughter of God" is fiery and full of visual energy. Wells' interpretation begins in black-and-white in an industrial landscape that appears dipped in silver. Utilizing reflective surfaces as well as pyrotechnics on set, images are created that appear more painterly than photographed. Crosses glow and strobe. Nothing is ever still. The painting-by-light imagery invokes hallucinations, where images collapse into one another. Demonic choirs of sound and sparking electrical wires give way to bellowing flames and painterly charcoal images, which haunt the industrial warriors who fight for Joan.

Crafting experimental films in between commercial gigs since the late seventies, Wells has never created work that has been easy to describe or pigeonhole. In 1990 he completed *The Talking Rain*, a 16mm black-and-white short based on the myth of Orpheus. "It didn't make me famous or anything, but it was well received," Wells says of the 20-minute film, which played at major festivals around the U.S. and Canada. "The narrative was so obscure that people gave up on it and said, 'That's cool and weird; let's show it.'"

Ten years later, Wells unleashed *Wired Angel*. "*Wired Angel* is sort of the feature version of *Talking Rain*, maybe even *Talking Rain II*," Wells explains between sips of coffee at his local diner in Princeton, New Jersey. "I had a character in mind for a woman to play, and there seemed to be a resonance with Joan of Arc. The more I read about Joan and the 15th century, the more the vortex of ideas seemed to coincide. Somehow this film noir industrial landscape began to look 15th century. Other things started happening. I do not how I thought of magnesium lances, but I did. Things started to look medieval. It wasn't really a stretch."

Unlike many experimental filmmakers, Wells had the help of some high-profile members of the film industry. While looking for actors, Wells was approached by Academy Award-winning composer Joe Renzetti (*The Buddy Holly Story*), whom he knew from the organization Closely Watched Films in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. "He had done some DAT dubs for me on *The Talking Rain*," Wells explains. "After I shot most of *Wired Angel*, he came over to my house to see a rough cut. A few days later he called me up and said he had an idea for a score. I was stunned. An Oscar-winning composer asking me if he could write the score! I said yes." The soundtrack for *Wired Angel* combines the voices of women and children, chants, masses, and vowel sounds. Renzetti spent over a year arranging a digitally constructed soundtrack with sound designer Fred Szymanski, whose sound design credits include *Blood Simple* and *Raising Arizona*. Renzetti and Szymanski created a soundtrack that reflects not only the graveness of Joan's trial, but also the harsh and intolerant mood of her medieval environment.

Wells worked with pyrotechnic wizard Joe Wicen, whose work on director Stefan Avalos' film *The Money Game* led Wells to create a great deal of on-set pyrotechnics with enormous fires and explosives. "You can do these things in After Effects," Wells says, "but it's so much fun using pyrotechnics. And you cannot get the sculptural three-dimensional feel, which is so avant-garde." Avalos, who previously co-directed *The Last Broadcast*, also pitched in to help create the special effects and props, such as the magnesium lances and flying apparatus. His creations were essential to the look and feel of the film, which Wells enjoys because "it pushes the attention span. After all, this is the story of Joan of Arc; you have to see how it ends."

So far, *Wired Angel* has not had the wide acceptance of *The Talking Rain*. Perhaps the feature length has scared away some programmers, but Wells is still confident the film will find an audience. "[Viewers] are drawn into the narrative, then they really have to be with it for 90 minutes. It requires a tremendous amount of attention. *Wired Angel* is one continuous unspooling of images, where you can't understand the images in part one until you have seen part four. This is very difficult for a pre-screener or programmer to look at, especially when they have stacks and stacks of VHS cassettes to go through." Nevertheless, *Wired Angel* did screen at the 1999 Hamptons International Film Festival and will no doubt find its way in the world, braced by the example of Joan's fortitude.

For information on Wired Angel, *log on to www.CinemaFX. com/WiredAngel.*

Sabina Dana Plasse (sdanap@yahoo.com) is a filmmaker living in New York who is a freelance writer and currently working in feature development.

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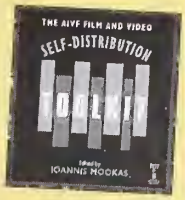
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The mission of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is to increase the creative and professional opportunities for independent video and filmmakers and to ensure and enhance the growth of independent media by providing services, advocacy and information. In these ways, AIVF promotes diversity and democracy in the communication and expression of ideas and images.

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4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

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Veena Sud

ONE NIGHT

BY PAUL POWER

MISUNDERSTANDING, ISOLATION, AND ALIENation—particularly the alienation of women—are the main themes that run through the work of New Jersey-based Veena Sud. "I'm interested in exploring our interiorities," notes the filmmaker of the four shorts she has made since 1995 on subjects as diverse as police targeting of minorities, sexual abuse, single motherhood, and loneliness.

A single mom herself, of mixed ethnicity (her mother is Filipino while her father hails from India), Sud has been keen to highlight and then dispel the misconceptions surrounding that most easily targeted of stereotypes: the single mother of color. When she made *Stretchmark*, a lyrical, yet quietly raging super 8 piece on the tribulations of single motherhood, Sud was experiencing many of the same emotions that emerged as voices in the film, describing the project as a "poetic talking back" to those who had pre-conceived notions of single mothers.

"There was this whole Diane Sawyer-inspired 'welfare queen' thing in the media. I could feel it very viscerally: simply being a brown, young woman with a child made me this target, this public property," she says, referring to *60 Minutes* correspondent Diane Sawyer's public attacks on single moms who were perceived to be sponging off the welfare system. "*Stretchmark* was partially autobiographical, but it was also [the story of] a lot of my friends, and so I brought all our stories together in one woman's voice to make it one woman's story. It was definitely a journey into this woman's inner life."

The fiction/documentary hybrid that results is a haunting, insightful piece which highlights the uncertainties and loneliness that can be the lot of young single mothers. The film, like all of Sud's shorts, is shot in B&W, with none of the womens' faces visible, while the locations she chooses are notable for their sparseness.

Her 1997 short, *Rain*, proved to be a prescient piece in the context of New York's current policing climate. Deceptively simple (two young kids playing with a toy gun are chased by a cop who shoots one of them dead), the starkness of the iconography—kids of color plus white cop plus guns—speaks volumes, particularly in light of her decision not to use any dialogue. Her most recent short *One Night* (1999) appears at first to be a genre thriller, but the themes of alienation, misunderstanding, and finally reconciliation emerge between an elderly woman and a pursued young woman.



Aixa Kendrick Rudd in One Night. Right: The director with DP Michael Sandoval.

After training as a journalist at Columbia University in New York and working as a radio journalist with noted activist station WBAI, then working as marketing and distribution director at Third World Newsreel, Sud completed NYU's film graduate course where she made *Rain* and *One Night*. So does she consider herself a political filmmaker? "I think by virtue of who I am—a woman of color, on my own with a child, and an artist in a country that isn't very supportive of artists—what I say usually is counter to what the mainstream says about people like me."

Sud's next move, however, is into a more mainstream arena: she has a pair of feature fiction scripts in development with A Large Production Company. The first, entitled *Hush*, is a police murder thriller: a woman detective tries to help an amnesiac woman piece together a horrific night of her life when she and her child were thrown from a window. The death of the child is central to the story, as the detective is trying to get over the loss of her own child. Sud has no misconceptions as to where this new direction is taking her. "It is a genre detective film—it follows a lot of the same conventions—but the characters and their situations are a little bit different. There's no love story, there's no male detective, and it's very much about two women coming to terms with their self-worth. I was very influenced by Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and the kind of situations that women find themselves in where they're forced to commit acts of extreme or horrible violence in order to survive, to continue living for their children, for themselves." Sud can't say any more about her second script other than it's about "a woman who's trapped inside of her nightmare."

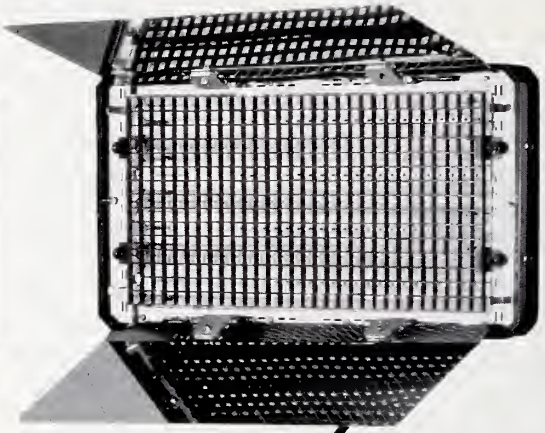
Sud is an admirer of both Hitchcock and Kurosawa, citing the latter's 1963 masterpiece *High and Low* as a major influence. However, she's keen to dispel the notion that her traits and characteristics pigeon-hole her into a specific type of filmmaking. She is equally at home making films that have a political message—her production company is entitled KMF Films (Kalayaan Means Freedom, "kalayaan" being the Filipino word for "freedom")—plus films that deal with gender and race issues, as well as straight-ahead thrillers.

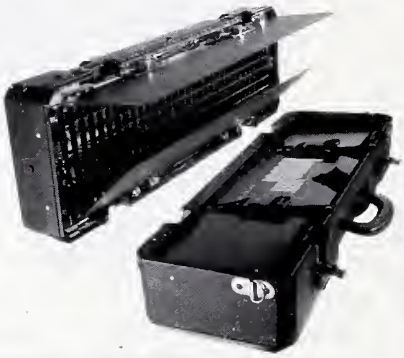
"The stories I'm drawn to are very 'universal' in the sense that the actors and the people inhabiting the worlds are definitely people of color. My films are definitely not Third World festival films where people can come and see images of Indian and Filipino people in the film and learn about their culture. To me, it's like I and people of color inhabit the same world as everyone else, so we have as much right to be in these movies or themes and stories as anyone else does."

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Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.

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LESSONS IN SHOWMANSHIP

The Whitney Biennial demonstrates the shortcomings of media exhibition in the museums.

BY AARON KRACH



SLAMMING DOORS: Among the crowd-pleasing installations at the Whitney was Dara Friedman's *Bim Bam.*

IT'S BEEN 21 YEARS SINCE THE WHITNEY Museum of American Art first added film and video to its biennial exhibitions of recent contemporary art. Yet the museum has not been able to successfully combine media artists with those working in more traditional media.

To be sure, the problems with the Biennial's film and video program—poor attendance, a lack of critical response, and questionable scheduling decisions—are not unique to the Whitney. Unfortunately they're all too common among venues more accustomed to showing painting and sculpture than media arts. In this sense, while the Biennial stands out as one of the highest-profile exhibitions of contemporary art in this country, it is symptomatic of the unease museums express when programming film and video.

"The Biennial is an amazing opportunity to expose the public to the force of contemporary media arts," says Elisabeth Subrin, director of *Shulie*, a film selected for the 2000 Biennial. "I just wish there was a more aggressive effort to integrate the film and video into the show as a whole. It would be a benefit to the media community as a whole. So far, my experience with [the Biennial] has been somewhat alienating."

THE WHITNEY BIENNIAL is easily the most famous contemporary art exhibition in America. Begun in 1932 as an annual exhibition of painting or sculpture, the exhibition now includes everything from installations to Internet art. Because of its claim to highlight the best in contemporary art, the Biennial is often the source of critical hand-wringing over what is chosen or ignored.

As in years past, the 2000 Biennial (held March 23 to June 4) attracted significant attention from both the press and general public. Articles on the selected artists began appearing months before the exhibition opened. The show then was greeted with numerous reviews in New York publications and healthy audience attendance. Public interest was so great that visitors had to jockey for position in front of the paintings and line up to get inside the small galleries featuring elaborate installations.

But somehow this interest bypassed the screening room, a third floor gallery-turned-theater, with a white-painted wall for a screen and free-standing chairs. On one rainy Saturday afternoon, when a waiting line snaked around the building, only five people were watching Jill Godmilow's docu-essay *What Farocki Taught*. Later, only three people ventured into the screening room to watch Craig Baldwin's latest experimental feature, *Spectres of the Spectrum*.

"We all know the world doesn't shine too bright a light on the single-screen film and video works in the Biennial," says Jem Cohen, director of *Instrument*, a documentary about the punk band Fugazi. "Being in the Biennial is just fine. I'm happy whenever work finds a new—and in the case of *Instrument*—unusual venue. To be honest though, it isn't a really big deal."

Poor attendance inside the screening room was all the more striking in comparison to the popularity of the media-installations spread throughout the galleries. There was always a crowd waiting to see Dara Friedman's 16mm dual-projection piece *Bim Bam*, for instance, featuring the artist opening and slamming two doors as she exited and entered a room of light, the violent soundtrack completely out of synch. And neither challenging content nor epic length deterred visitors from Lutz Bacher's rather conceptual *Olympiad*—a deconstruction of Leni Reifenstahl's eponymous work—which runs almost two hours and is a shaky, black and white tour through Berlin's Olympic stadium, with added glitches, static, and noise. Perhaps because the gallery was set up to be entered and exited at the visitor's pace, it was jammed more often than the screening room, even though Bacher's work was much more challenging.

Critical response to the film and video sections mirrored the popular response: it was negligible. "The films in the Biennial have not been reviewed, as far as I can see," says Godmilow, "whereas the paintings, sculptures and even some of the video installations have been." Indeed, the installations were mentioned in several



Yvonne Welbon's *Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis at 100*, one of the works in the Biennial's sparsely attended screening room.

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reviews, including those in *New York Magazine* and the *New York Times*, but the film/video screenings elicited only the following line from *New York* critic Mark Steven: "The show also contains films and video projects, including some that are presented in the museum's theater." The *Village Voice*—usually the staunchest supporter of the cinematic avant-garde in New York—reviewed the art exhibition, but neglected the film and video. And while *New York Times* film writer Dave Kehr gave a brief overview of the film/video line-up, favorably reviewing seven out of 27 works, *Times* art critic Michael Kimmelman said nothing about the screenings.

One reason for this absence of coverage is the continuing segregation between art and film critics at newspapers and magazines. This editorial policy is unfortunate for two reasons: First, the artists these critics are writing about blithely ignore such boundaries. There are artists who use film and video, and film and video directors who make art. The Biennial curators tried to include some of each. The committee's 27 choices ran the gamut from gallery-based artists like Sharon Lockhart (*Teatro Amazonas*), to indie-film personalities like Harmony Korine (*Gummo*) and Errol Morris (*Fast, Cheap & Out of Control*).

Second, the critics' isolation within their respective turfs leads to a lack of context, interest, and grounded critical thinking when faced with hybrid work. As a result, artists who cross-pollinate suffer from misunderstanding or, more frequently, benign neglect at exhibitions like the Biennial.

ONE PROBLEM SPECIFIC TO THE WHITNEY was the issue of scheduling. Oddly, the thematically-grouped video/film programs were scheduled to run on the same day every week. So every Thursday was "American Life" day, with the same three shorts and feature on view, while weekends offered only one program, "Re-Thinking Documentary." This schedule was to be repeated during the entire run of the exhibition.

It may be fine to keep a painting hanging in the same place during a 10-week show, but film/video screenings require a different way of thinking. The hazard in programming a screening schedule this way is clear. Unless a visitor can spend an entire week at the museum, it's impossible to see all the films. Worse yet, all the screenings except one were held in the daytime. If you have a day job, the only film you could see after work was *Gummo*, scheduled in the museum's only late-night slot on Thursdays; ironically, this was the film that had the widest pre-Biennial distribution.

The events depicted in this tape are inspired by the diaries of Zainab Fakhouri, Dr. Fadl Fakhouri's wife. Until his death in 1993, Dr. Fakhouri was the foremost historian of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1991).



From Walid Ra'ad's 18 minute video *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs* (1999).

When asked about the scheduling, Whitney spokesperson Stephen Soba admitted, "The curatorial decision to do it this way has some problems, and everybody has been concerned about it. [The museum] is talking about rectifying the situation by adding some more screenings, perhaps some evening screenings or some rotations."

One bright spot was the museum's handling of admissions. For the first time, a visitor could pay a lower price to see a film and not the entire Biennial show—a one day pass to the screenings cost $5 versus $10 for the entire exhibition. One would think that such a financial incentive would have helped to bring more visitors to the screening room.

Perhaps one factor that kept them away—in additional to the deafening silence of the press—was the fact that many of the films and videos have already played the festival or museum circuit.

"*Instrument* already screened all over the world, at independent media joints, squats, small theaters, and festivals," says Cohen. "Happily, since the band's focus has always been away from big record releases and that kind of 'expiration-date'-based distribution, the movie seems to maintain a healthy life and a continuing momentum, outside of both the art and movie 'businesses.' "

As it stands now, the Biennial primarily screens work that is at the end of its trajectory. Basically, there was nothing new, with some films dating all the way back to 1996.

Officially, the museum answers that criticism by saying the Biennial is supposed to present the best work made in the last few years. But why can't the chosen filmmakers be trusted to deliver their latest work? (The museum makes that leap of faith for some visual artists when it commissions new work specifically for the Biennial, as it did this year from Sarah Sze, Robert Gober, and Hans Haacke.) In addition to providing the museum with world premieres, this change might give the film/video program some much-needed excitement and attract press and public notice.

Godmilow remembers a friend who had a CD-ROM in the Biennial three years ago and received invitations to travel and screen her work because of it. "That might not happen to me because *What Farocki Taught* has been out since 1998 and played lots of international and national festivals," says Godmilow. "But we'll see what develops."

Given that it considers itself the country's premier exhibition of contemporary art (and includes film and video under that rubric), the Whitney Biennial clearly has a long way to go before it offers anything to invited mediamakers beyond the cachet of its name.

But it's important to remember that the Whitney Biennial name is not so shabby. In the end, maybe being included in the Biennial isn't about the few people who see the film there, but about the prestige the exhibition adds to an artist's resume—something of considerable value when seeking funding for future projects. For Godmilow, inclusion in the Biennial "is certainly icing [on the cake], and probably helpful in the arena of further funding. I just got a Guggenheim grant, and I have a sneaking suspicion the Whitney exhibition helped a lot to secure it."

Aaron Krach lives and writes in New York City.











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A Four-Square Deal

Mike Figgis' Time Code

BY MARCO MASONI

JUDGING BY HIS Bohemian appearance, you'd take Mike Figgis for a shaman, a college professor, or, more in line with his actual skills, a jazz man. In fact, as a director and an accomplished composer, Figgis has often taken the road less traveled and scored his own movies. And long before *Leaving Las Vegas* made him a successful Englishman in Hollywood, Figgis was experimenting with multi-media productions that blended live action with music and film.



Mike Figgis captured the action from four simultaneous perspectives and lets the audience decide who to watch.

Time Code, Figgis' first digital feature, takes him back to these roots. Shot in real-time with four customized Sony DSR-1 cameras that followed a handful of actors nonstop for a span of 93 minutes (the length of the digital tape), it's a daring experiment that approaches film as if it were a complex orchestral composition. While improvising their lines, lead actors Stellan Skarsgard, Kyle MacLachlan, Julian Sands, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Saffron Burrows, Salma Hayek, and Holly Hunter used synchronized watches to keep track of where they were in the story, which had been meticulously mapped out by Figgis on musical score paper.

The digital feature, projected onto a quadruple-split screen, premiered at the Yahoo! Online Film Festival to a packed audience. All were curious to see this novelty and hear the director/composer's live sound mix (which he decided against at the last moment, given that it was the film's premiere, opting instead to save the live sound mix for his subsequent road tour).

Watching *Time Code* was a disorienting and exhilarating experience. Each of the four frames was assigned its own camera, allowing audience members to choose what they wanted to watch, with some guidance from the sound mix. Instead of trying to steep the audience in a single audio-visual sensation, the film's effect was to create a multitude of sensations and reactions at any given time. While one audience member focused on the pathetic advances of a security guard on an aspiring actress, another might have been more attuned to the desperate measures a woman was taking to spy on her lesbian lover—that is, until the first audience member let out a chuckle having nothing to do with the other scene.

When the action began to converge, the four parts of the screen nearly became one, and the audience, too, converged in an edgy sort of way, their eyes darting back and forth, their ears tuning in and out, smartly absorbing the full tension of a scene. This was exactly what Figgis intended—to make a film that invited the audience to be active viewers, rather than just munching on popcorn and spilling Coke.

At the Yahoo! Online Film Festival, *The Independent* had a chance to catch up with Figgis and discuss his *tour de force* film.

By telling filmmakers working with DV that they should feel free to experiment with everything and anything, is there not the danger of encouraging artlessness?

Without a doubt, thousands of inferior films are about to be made that will or will not find a market. Some that are really bad and exploitative and crass will become huge hits. And works of genius will be ignored. But that's par for the course in any medium.

I just like the idea that, in the same way that anybody can write a book if you've got a pencil and a paper, now anybody can make a film. It opens it up in a way that's less elitist and techno-based.

You said you don't have much desire to make another film on 35mm. I imagine that's less about the look than it is about the process.

I've got my own Super 16 Aaton which I can combine with a digi approach. And I've got a couple of digital cameras which I'm very happy with. So I actually own enough tools now to make a choice about how to shoot.

I love film. I love celluloid. But Super 16mm is fine to me. In fact, I prefer the aesthetics of 16mm to 35mm. It's a little bit rougher looking, softer, and a tad more impressionistic. I find 35mm a little too clinical now. In fact, it looks like high definition video. They kind of belong to each other, I think.

Might you have made *Leaving Las Vegas* on digital?

Right now if I'd had the cameras that I shot *Time Code* on, I would've thought about it. *Leaving Las Vegas* was such a scramble for budget, that any way of holding the budget down without losing quality would've been of interest to me. But I think Super 16 was perfect for it.

Why did you choose to do *Time Code* on DV?

It's always been a fantasy of many filmmakers to shoot a film in real time, with no edits. Before one was limited to the length of a [film] magazine. Now for the first time it's possible to shoot a film for over 90 minutes without a cut. So I started playing around in my notebook with the idea. One of the problems is that if you shoot a mono film for 90 minutes with just one camera, you're limited to where the camera can be—it can only be in one place at a time. Of course, the beauty with conventional film is that editing allows you to cut to anywhere you want at any time. So, I thought the only way to achieve

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that effect was to have a multi-screen format.

Necessity being the mother of invention, I started to make diagrams and came up with the idea of shooting with four cameras and having a quadrant with four parallel actions that work all facets of the same story. I got very excited when I thought, my God, technically, at last, this is all possible.

"Each of the four cameras has a musical staff and each bar line was one minute, so the whole film was scored in a sense like a string quartet."

The trickiest thing was the dub. It really was. Because at that point I'm having to make decisions about multiple screens of dialogue. It was not easy. If four screens have more than, say, ten people talking all the time, you just alienate the audience and you wouldn't be able hear clearly what anybody was saying. If, on the other hand, you lightly push one of the dialogues and you're using the surround speakers and you equalize all of the voices slightly differently, you find that you can differentiate what people are saying, as you would in the lobby of a hotel. But you have to subtly, without using a sledgehammer, lead the eye by using a very sophisticated approach with the ear. Which approximates the way life is.



Playing digital four-square with (clockwise from top left) Hayek, Tripplehorn, Burrows & MacLachlan, and Skarsgård.

What did you find useful in helping the actors rise to the challenge?

Clearly, the most useful thing was the technological advantage. If you shoot on video and you're shooting 93 minutes in real time starting in the morning, you wrap in time for lunch, and the video technician immediately makes four copies, upgrading it from digicam to digibeta with the same time code. You then play back all four digibeta tapes onto four monitors stacked into a quadrant, with four outputs going into a mixer. The point was for them to see the dynamic of what they're in, to see themselves in context. If an actor is really going over the top—because everyone is improvising—and being selfish, there is nothing more telling than watching yourself in front of 27 other actors sitting together. Nothing I could say to an actor would have the same power or effect as them actually seeing what they're doing. We sit around as a group and I invite everybody to make comments. I may say, "Okay, here's what I think: it's working well, but you're stepping on each other's lines at 1:43, so we have to reorganize that sequence slightly."

Does the title *Time Code* speak to that process more than anything?

Yes, this film is entirely based on time code technology. We've got twenty-seven channels of radio mikes, then all the camera mikes and mikes that were planted, because there was no room for any kind of boom anywhere with four cameras. So the picture and the sound had to be married by some system, which had to be time code. I think it's kind of a provocative phrase anyway.

Much has been made of the fact that, as a composer, you pay more attention to scoring than most other directors. How did your approach to music change for this particular project?

Interestingly enough, not only did the actors get to practice their acting on a daily basis, but because I was doing these live mixes every night, I also brought in a large number of CDs and tried different approaches to the music. This informed their acting on a daily basis. For instance, I used some really slow pieces of string music that have a certain poignancy, and the actors started to adjust their style knowing that that was the way the scene was going and that's how it might turn out in the final mix. So it became kind of two-handed thing with the actors and the music developing together. Which is also interesting if you want to change your mind later, because you can go against that tendency with the music, which I've now done in a couple of instances.

Also, the way the film was written as a story, it's actually written on music paper. Each of the four cameras has a musical staff and each bar line was one minute, so the whole film was scored in a sense like a string quartet. From my training as a musician, it was the only way I could think of plotting out four cameras.

Have you thought of integrating the web into the film development process?

I have, but my theory about the web is that it's a kind of renaissance of literature and the written word. I'm really happy with a fountain pen, a notebook, and the web as a way of talking and exchanging ideas and researching. To me the Internet is kind of scary. Too many possibilities, too many choices.

Any idea what comes next, after *Time Code*?

I just want to go to bed and sleep for about a year.

Marco Masoni is the co-founder of dScoop.com, featuring community-powered digital video entertainment.

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Does the term 'online film festival' mean anything at all?

BY SCOTT CASTLE





WITH THE SHORT SUBJECT RENAISSANCE IN full swing, a number of exhibition models have begun to emerge. While online juggernauts like AtomFilms and IFILM are busy buying films at a blinding pace, others have taken alternate approaches. A small percentage of sites streaming work call themselves "online film festivals"—from The Sync and New Centerseat to the mysterious LeoFest. But what exactly *is* an on-line film festival, and how does it differ from other sites streaming film and video?

"I think everybody uses the expression 'online festival' in a different way, and part of it is just the nature of the word," says Yahoo! Internet Life's entertainment editor Bilge Ebiri. "For some, it's just an more interesting way of naming their site." For their part, Yahoo! uses the word to characterize a hybrid event that's part virtual and part actual. In March, they held their first Yahoo! Online Film Festival in Los Angeles [see sidebar p. 21]. The result was less a traditional film festival and more a meeting of minds, but nonetheless it was an event that physically brought together representatives from numerous dotcom film sites, who met in the flesh to screen films and steal each others' good ideas.

Yahoo!'s event illustrates the first difference between a film site and a film festival site: volume versus curation. Like festivals that can show only so many films because of time and space constraints, online festivals carefully select a limited number of films. Many other film-streaming sites go for volume. But once your film is up and running on these sites, it competes with all the site's other films for viewer's attention; thus, the level of exposure is conversely proportionate to the number of films available.

Like Yahoo!, D.FILM [dfilm.com] is an online venture that melds real and virtual film festivals. "What makes a site like D.FILM different from a site like Atom or IFILM [is that] Atom has, like, 900 films on their site in a year," says Bart Cheever, D.FILM's executive producer. In contrast, D.FILM put up only about 40 films last year, selected from over 1,000 submissions. And all had something in common: D.FILM stands for digital film, which it defines as anything shot on digital video or edited digitally. The site features 'How To' pages and links for new digital products, as well as interviews with filmmakers whose work is featured on the site. "We're showcasing the best of the digital work that's being done out there, and not just everything," says Cheever. D.FILM launched the (sponsored) Skyy Screening Room a few months ago, highlighting a different film every week, while approximately 60 archived films remain on the site in perpetuity. The rights agreements operate on a case-by-case basis; filmmakers receive no fee for non-exclusive rights agreements and compensation varies when exclusive rights are given. The company also brings in revenue by licensing their MovieMaker software to various websites.

Lucas' stormtroopers meet Giuliani's in Jason Wishnow's *Star Wars or Bust*, a sequel commissioned by UK's Channel 4 after seeing his previous work *Tatooine or Bust* on D.FILM.
A vicitm of teenage thuggery in *What About Juvenile Deliquency?*, a 1955 cautionary film in Shortfest's *Mental Hygiene* collection.

D.FILM strikes a delicate balance between its online and offline ingredients, hosting a traveling festival of approximately 22 shorts. The films chosen change from place to place; last year's festival screened 35 films overall hitting 21 cities around the world, including Berlin, São Paolo, and

Rotterdam—all cities known for their own successful festivals. D.FILM was even chosen to be the first-ever digital film showcase at Cannes in 1999.

"We have these two components that are equally complementary," says Cheever. "We are able to go out to 21 cities and meet with people on a really intense face-to-face basis, but at the same time we have this web site which can take that same experience and open it up to everybody else. That's one of the great advantages of the Internet—it's letting that experience be replicated for anyone anywhere in the world who wants to check it out."

Cheever clearly believes in the democratizing effect of new technology. "A lot of the people who've had stuff in our festival and then had their films picked up by MTV, *Saturday Night Live*, Showtime, and Channel 4 are just people like [you], who have the same home computer in their house and the same digital camcorder."

Often the biggest obstacles to enjoying a film online are the download time and the fact that after a few minutes the tiny frame on-screen becomes increasingly claustrophobic. One online film festival feels your pain and offers a short-term remedy. The 60 Second Film Festival [60secondfilmfestival.com] is a nonprofit subsidiary that grew out of Charged.com, an online magazine site, which has been showing shorts since its inception four years ago. They'd been utilizing streamed content to highlight their articles for years and turned that know-how into a showcase for films whose mercifully short length are enjoyable at any bandwidth. "People going onto the Internet want quick delivery," explains Jen Heck, Charged's editor in chief and the festival's director, who admits to an obsession with conciseness. "The festival came from a combination of the necessity to deliver film content to people more efficiently—and more effectively on the Net—and also my desire to keep things short," she says.

"The opportunity to take a first-time DV filmmaker from the Netherlands and distribute that film around the world is a really great opportunity and something that's uniquely suited to the Internet," says Heck. "At the same time, many people who work at Charged.com are filmmakers who are used to the old-school film festival style and think that has value as well. So our festival is both online and offline."

The site offers no payment and requires no fee, agreeing to approximately six months worth of nonexclusive rights for screenings both on- and offline. Selected winners may have their films purchased by Charged.com or get offered freelance assignments by the site.

Charged.com's first bricks-and-mortar festival event took place in New York this May and was attended by both local and international filmmakers. An audience award was culled from viewers who'd seen the films online and voted before the physical festival took place. "That's something that can be done online to a certain extent, but having a real festival event with parties where people can talk and meet and network is also of value," believes Heck. "The 60 second format is something that makes it accessible to a larger audience, which doesn't necessarily have the tolerance or the technology to view all those [longer] films."

Some online film festivals take the selective approach even further, working more along the lines of museums curators than festival programmers. Shortfest [Shortfest.com], in fact, uses outside experts to select the works on their site, such as filmmaker Scott Saunders and the film curator from the American Museum of the Moving Image, David Schwartz. These outside curators change each month along with the films. "These curators do this as a living and have for many years," explains Dan Holton-Roh, Shortfest's founder and CEO. The result is the equivalent of taking a guided tour rather than randomly searching the web for hours on your own.

"We see these films that are up on [other] sites and we really have no sense of how or why they're there," says Adam Ornan, Shortfest's creative director. "We wanted to contextualize everything that is on the site. So [viewers] would know who was choosing them, why they were being chosen, and what these films' specific place in history were." The site aquires nonexclusive Internet rights to the films for the initial 30-day posting and are currently working on getting extended rights to allow showcased films to remain on the site's archives for a year.

Not only can you see multiple works from an influential indie filmmaker like Leslie Thorton on the site's monthly film-

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maker focus, you can also see film collections like *Mental Hygiene*—instructional films from the 1950s featured in the most popular retrospective in AMMI's history—without making a trip to Queens. "[Shortfest] came from our desire to use the web to show films you can't get anywhere else. Stuff that you not only can't see on-line, but, unless you're an avid museum-goer in New York, you can't really see off-line either," reports Ornan proudly.

Historically, film festivals have focused themselves around their geographic locale or thematic content, intent on bringing movies to a city that may not otherwise have the opportunity to see them. With the Internet, however, a worldwide audience is an instant possibility, so a thematic focus becomes the festival's sole attraction. Each of the festivals mentioned here has found focused and unique themes to stoke its respective audience. Likewise, each bridges the gap between its online and offline presence with a variety of novel methods. But the common thread remains the necessity to exclude the majority of films out there in order to shape the festival's identity.

How these models will fare against other numerous, rapidly expanding online film companies remain to be seen. So while we all wait patiently for broadband to arrive, these online festivals are providing, uniquely curated work and expanding the definition of the term 'film festival' with their pioneering efforts.

Scott Castle is listings editor at The Independent *and a freelance writer.*

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Is it live or is it the Internet? Browsing the first Yahoo! Online Film Festival.

BY MARCO MASONI



South Park co-auteur Matt Stone (l) with an eager rep from CrapTV.com on a Yahoo! festival panel.

"So what do you make of all this?" asked one Hollywood producer. "I think everyone wants to make sure they're not missing something, but they're not quite sure what that something is," answered the New York entertainment attorney.

The two were chatting poolside at the Chateaux Marmont, waiting for a panel of recently anointed new media experts to kick off the first Yahoo! Online Film Festival.

In many ways, the Yahoo! Online Film Festival, held March 22–23 in Los Angeles, resembled a trade show more than it did a film festival, with thousands of participants coming to talk shop about film on the Internet. But talking about what the net means for film invariably leads to discussions about other forms of online entertainment—animation, repurposed clips from TV, interactive games, music videos, trailers, articles, chats and instant messaging, not to mention combinations of all the above.

The organizers envisioned a festival that highlighted how the Internet is impacting traditional filmmaking and giving rise to new forms of film entertainment (offshoots of the so-called "new economy"). They streamed short films on the net prior to the event, invited people to vote for their favorites, then presented prizes to the winners at the bricks-and-mortar festival venues (the Directors Guild of America and two nearby hotels). Along the way they showcased a few novelties: films about the web, films made with digital video, films promoted and distributed on the web, and so on.

All the while, exhibitors hawked their wares, aided by bikini-clad women, free t-shirts and caps, complimentary drinks, and other gadgetry giveaways. Veteran and recently-established companies like Sony, Shockwave, HitPlay, Honkworm, IFILM, Pop.com, and Wirebreak pitched everything from services to technology to content. Each had its press kits and press announcements on hand, describing their recent capital infusions and mergers and alliances and partnerships—anything to show that they were one step ahead of the game and had this entertainment Internet thing all figured out.

"It's about story," insisted Peter Guber in his keynote speech at the DGA. The head of Mandalay Pictures and former studio chief at Columbia, Guber predicted that "any scientific achievement that doesn't enhance the artist, his palette, his ability to reach the audience will fail." He stressed that the real convergence, as far as online entertainment was concerned, had to do with the content creators and the technologists, or what he called "the poet and the engineer." That said, Guber then announced that Mandalay is developing strategic partnerships in order to develop "convergent content" (mentioning, by way of example, *Gorillas in the Mist* from the point of view of the gorillas).

The broad spectrum of speakers and attendees was probably the second most interesting aspect of the event (the first being the premiere of Mike Figgis' groundbreaking *Time Code*; see page 15). There were Hollywood agents, entertainment attorneys, digital video crews, new media reporters, execs from online entertainment startups, and a fair dose of indie filmmakers who had seized upon the idea of pitching online entertainment ventures much as they would shop around a script (their new goals: to make a fortune, then a feature). There were also a few surprise guest appearances along the way, among them Matt Stone, co-creator of *South Park*; Ron Howard (for Pop.com); and Jim Belushi (for HitPlay). Stone, in particular, had the audience wondering what they were doing standing around a Hollywood pool attending an online film festival, when the best part of the Internet, he says, is how it gives films more chances to get seen, so filmmakers won't necessarily need film festivals like this one for exposure.

It might, in fact, make sense if future editions of the Yahoo! Online Film Festival were shaped into something more along the lines of a market for online entertainment. As an increasing number of web sites look to include media as part of their offerings, there will be a need for real-world venues where talent brokers, content creators, and buyers can meet, mingle, and make deals.

Marco Masoni is the co-founder of dScoop.com.

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WNET's *Reel New York* Series Reaches Out to Web Artists

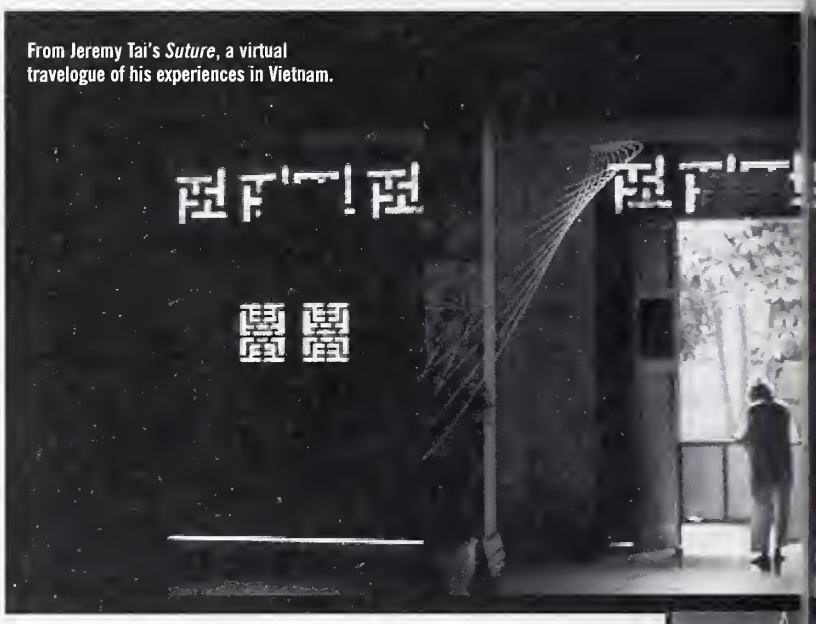
BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

SINCE FILLING THE VACUUM LEFT BEHIND BY the cancellation of WNET's independent acquisition series *Independent Focus* in 1996, the station's *Reel New York* series has been a greatly-needed venue for indie and experimental filmmakers in the New York area. As of last year, the eight-week summertime series began integrating New Media art into its format, as well, bringing emerging web artists into the fold. This year, *Reel New York* is stepping up its web component with a selection of exciting New Media artists that will pose healthy competition for their filmmaker peers, while also providing a second alternative venue for viewing *Reel New York* film and video selections.

"New York is a hotbed for this kind of activity," says Anthony Chapman, producer of the *Reel New York* web site [www.thirteen.org/reelnewyork], referring to New Media arts. "There are so many people involved in web technology here, in Silicon Alley, for example, who are also making strides in web-based art, and who are incredibly talented. Just as *Reel New York* reaches out to local filmmakers, we're letting these people know that we're here to give them a platform."

Chapman produces all of WNET's web sites and develops its original content for the web, which also accounts for a third of all national PBS web site content. This is his first year with *Reel New York*, however, and he has made it a priority to integrate the television aspect of the series with the web site. "I think in the past, the web art was kind of seen as tacked-on to the TV series," he says. "This year we want people to not see the web site and the series as two separate things." To that end, Chapman has developed interviews with the web artists that will play online, just like the filmmaker interviews that air on TV, and he brought broadband-ready film clips to the web site, so that TV series can be viewed (though not in their entirety) by a web-based audience.

The 12 web artists to be featured this year have come from diverse backgrounds and have equally diverse messages, ranging from Jeremy Tai's *Suture*—which is a visual, interactive travel diary of his experiences while re-visiting Vietnam—to *Praystation*, by Joshua Davis, featuring technology experiments based on mathematical formulas and chaos theories. *Praystation* also features on-going content that evolves on a daily basis, using flash-based animation.



From Jeremy Tai's *Suture*, a virtual travelogue of his experiences in Vietnam.



"I think in the past, the web art was seen as tacked on to the TV series. This year we want people to not see the web site and the series as two separate things."

—Anthony Chapman, producer
Reel New York website

The artists were selected based on an open-call for submissions, as well as recommendations from a board of curators, headed by Carl Goodman, who curates the net art division of the American Museum of Moving Images. Chapman says the eventual goal is to commission artists to create original work for the series. In the meantime, however, there is some fascinating viewing on the web site, some of which goes well beyond the standard idea of artsy images floating across a screen as you point and click images.

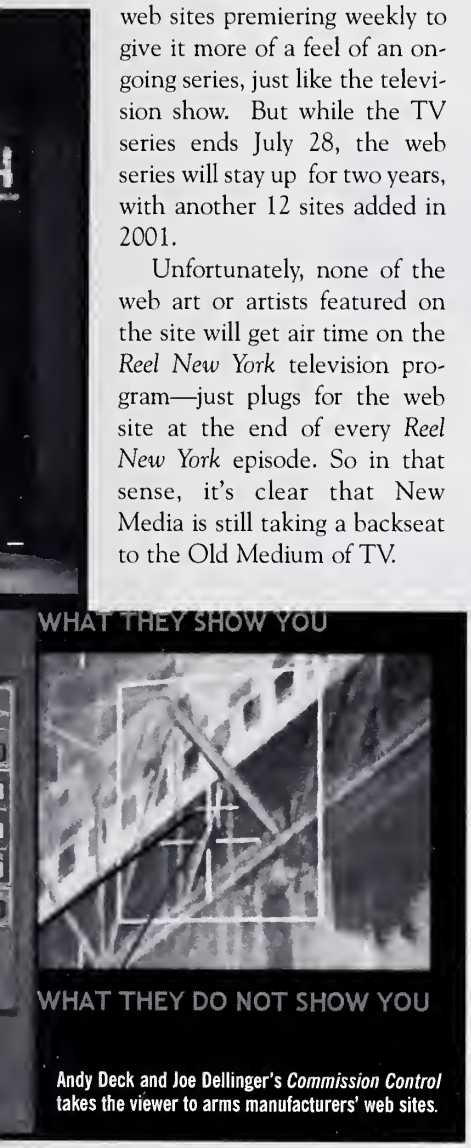
Fakeshop, for example, is a web-based art group that will feature performances from their Whitney Biennial exhibit, which uses video conferencing technology to create a "live cybernetic loop" for their installation called *The Human Use of Human Beings* (a title borrowed from Norbert Weiner, who coined the term "cybernetics" in 1948). The performances are also broadcast from Eyebeam, a web art collective's studio space in Chelsea.

Another web site, called *Empire 24/7*, by Wolfgang Staehle, employs a live webcam fixed on the Empire State Building around the clock. The image is then inverted on the screen, playing on themes of virtual reality and Andy Warhol's conceptual art film *Empire*. But one of the most poignant exhibits is *Commission Control*, by Andy

Deck and Joe Dellinger, wherein the user hits buttons on a TV remote control and is taken through a series of images from the war in Kosovo to the actual web sites of corporate arms manufacturers.

Chapman says the web art exhibits will be rolled out as the *Reel New York* series progresses, with the 12 web sites premiering weekly to give it more of a feel of an ongoing series, just like the television show. But while the TV series ends July 28, the web series will stay up for two years, with another 12 sites added in 2001.

Unfortunately, none of the web art or artists featured on the site will get air time on the *Reel New York* television program—just plugs for the web site at the end of every *Reel New York* episode. So in that sense, it's clear that New Media is still taking a backseat to the Old Medium of TV.



Andy Deck and Joe Dellinger's *Commission Control* takes the viewer to arms manufacturers' web sites.

However, as Eugene Thacker, a member of the Fakeshop collective notes, "The majority of TV ads that exist now are geared toward getting people on the web for e-commerce, so independent programming like this demonstrates that the web is not only about consumerism. Hopefully it will introduce an audience that has never been exposed to net art to a new experience that they may otherwise not even know exists."

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor at The Independent.

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Beginning, End, Middle

Deconstructing Narrative Structure with Nick Katsapetses and Jim McKay

BY MARK J. HUISMAN

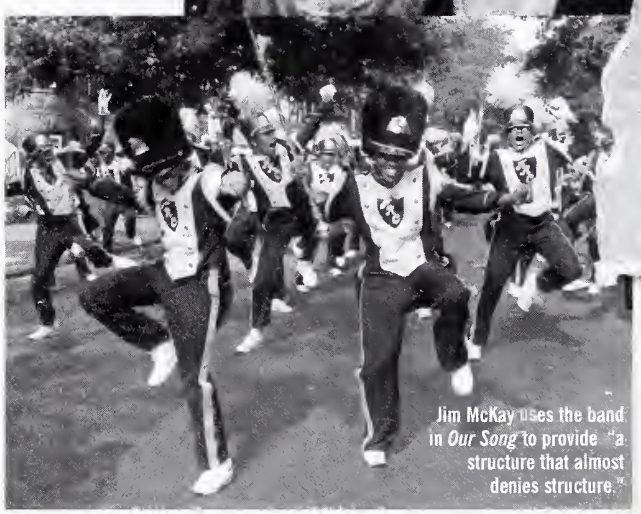
YOU'VE READ SYD FIELD FOR THE umpteenth time. You've read every possible screenwriting magazine, taken all the seminars. You have exhausted all your instructional resources, and you still can't make that plot point appear on page thirty. Your three acts don't seem even in length or importance. Heck, upon reflection, you don't even have three acts! So what's a screenwriter in such turbulent circumstances supposed to do?

Why not just toss the rules?

Filmmakers Nick Katsapetses and Jim McKay did just that. Their respective films, *The Joys of Smoking* (www.joysofsmoking.com) and *Our Song*, chuck tradition straight out the window. *Our Song* follows three teenage girls, Maria, Lanisha, and Jocelyn, who belong to a high school step-marching band as an intense three-week summer period permanently changes their friendship. *The Joys of Smoking* examines what happens when two men, Gray and Daniel, have a commitment ceremony much too prematurely, often viewing this through the prism of a group of even more dysfunctional relationships. While the two films differ vastly in style, tone, and content, they both eschew narrative traditions and formulas, even if both filmmakers started out playing by the rules. Both films have spent the first part of the year travelling the festival circuit, *The Joys of Smoking* being featured at MIX in New York City and now screening throughout London until September with the British Film Institute's Gay & Lesbian Film Tour, while *Our Song* premiered at Sundance and subsequently appeared in New Directors New Films, the Taos Talking Picture Festival, the San Francisco International Film Festival, and the Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema.



Director Nick Katsapetses used title cards, video confessions, and multiple rewrites to tear down and rebuild the structure of *The Joys of Smoking.*



Jim McKay uses the band in *Our Song* to provide "a structure that almost denies structure."

"I wrote as though I were finishing a sentence in an essay, not the whole essay, so to speak . . . and then I edited those episodic moments together."

—Nick Katsapetses

"THE FIRST DRAFT OF *THE JOYS OF Smoking* was A to Z, very linear, very Syd Field," Katsapetses laughs. "Major plot turn by page thirty. The hero overcoming obstacles. There was nothing unpredictable in any way. There were no flashbacks, no direct address, no video. It was formula, formula, formula."

"At first *Our Song* was very beginning, middle, end," says McKay. But it didn't end up that way. As he was considering alternatives, "I knew I needed some kind of outside force in the characters' lives," recalls McKay. "One day I ran into a marching band rather serendipitously on the street, and a little light bulb went off. Using the band as an outside force in the characters' lives gave me a structure that almost denies structure. It counters the negativity and uncontrollable forces that work against these girls. The band is a safe space to learn and make friends." This device plays out in narrative developments, like the band's trip to Alaska which, McKays says, is "a very big deal" for these kids.

"Suddenly Maria leaves the band," says McKay. "She's not going to be in that safe space any longer. This raises the stakes for her to do battle in the outside world, the real world."

While McKay's film has no real beginning and unfolds in a way that does not immediately reveal the main characters, it does indeed have a clear story line: Three girls are friends. They encounter some personal difficulties, sometimes with each other, sometimes independent of each other. A big shift in their friendship occurs.

"For a long time, you're in the middle of all these faces and three girls have this disagreement, but you're still not sure the movie is about them," says McKay. "I don't like to start at the beginning and end at the grand finale. For some people [my choice is] not satisfying, but for me, it's

more satisfying. I like the idea of not telling the audience every goddamn thing, letting them figure some shit out on their own."

Katsapetses' film is clearly about two gay men wrestling with premature commitment, but it is also about two other couples dealing with relationship issues. Everything is further foiled by the messy family trio of Daniel, his sister, Tiffany, and their mother.

"When you watch my film, you don't know when things are occurring," says Katsapetses. "It's pretty clear at first that it's in the past and from Gray's perspective. But as the film progresses, you don't always know whose perspective you're watching, when it happens, or the order in which it happens. I think that engages an audience in a refreshing way."

Both filmmakers do, however, incorporate some traditional narrative, even if it is just for a single story arc. In *Our Song*, for example, there is a clear narrative in which Maria has a summer romance, gets pregnant, and leaves school. But McKay veered away from providing a conclusive ending. Originally, that character had an abortion, a story McKay devised to debunk the myth that young women of color don't believe in abortion. But ultimately, that just seemed too pat.

"I did do some A, B, C," McKay laughs. "But in Maria's case, the more I got to know her, the more I realized that was not the particular choice this character would make. I satisfied my politics by making it clear that one of her friends had an abortion." But the ending of *Our Song* leaves Maria's decision unclear.

Katsapetses also uses his main characters, Gray and Daniel, to separate the main narrative from the secondary stories, which he calls "soap opera-like vignettes." These include a story about a lesbian couple, Laura and Carrie, in the midst of a horrific breakup; the ongoing conflict between Daniel, his sister Tiffany (an unhappy, lonely woman whose surrogate family is the children's dolls for which she designs clothing), and her equally unhappy, lonely, alcoholic mother; and the most unlikely story of the model-handsome Morgan, who falls in love with chubby, gym-phobic Troy.

"On a very base level, Gray and Daniel provide my narrative structure," Katsapetses explains. "They ground the audience in the narrative. And when you see them, which happens at the beginning, middle, and end of the film, you feel oriented. You know what the main narrative is, even if you don't know exactly what's going on." But after finishing his first edit, Katsapetses was horrified at that very clarity: "I was appalled at how boring a movie I had made."

Katsapetses embarked on a radical revision. Over and over, he watched individual scenes or entire sequences with which he was dissatisfied, and decided where and what to add. For two segments, he re-wrote and re-wrote and re-wrote. The actors received the new scenes the next day and shot them the day after that. Sometimes Katsapetses wrote new material based on a prior scene's emotional content, or on where he wanted to place that new material.

"I wrote as though I were finishing a sentence in an essay, not the whole essay, so to speak," says Katsapetses. "I would look at, say, a ten-minute sequence beginning to end. Then I added punctuation marks to what were already episodic moments within that sequence. And then I edited those episodic moments together." The end result is a haphazard feeling of a film that jumps between stories and characters. Katsapetses found this exercise liberating, if a little nerve-wracking.

"I had to just let go of the entire narrative," he explains. "I could not worry about it. I was taking individual character situations one at a time. I had no idea whatsoever what the structure would end up being or if there would be a structure." Accordingly, Katsapetses also ignored the ethic that one page of script equals one minute of screen time. "This is going to sound horribly undisciplined, but I didn't pay attention to the length of either a single page or a single scene," he says. "I just wrote until I was at the end. I have takes that are ten, fifteen minutes long, although most of them aren't in the movie. I wrote scenes I hadn't realized were necessary."

McKay broke a golden rule by situating major plot shifts in actions about minor characters. One such shift happens around Eleanor, a neighbor for whom Maria sometimes babysits. Eleanor is heard from only one time, shouting down at the girls from high up in a housing project as they pass by on the street below. Several scenes later, Eleanor has committed suicide, which throws the plot into a new direction.

"It's hard to make your plot changes so passive," McKay admits, "but I had heard so many news stories the summer I wrote the script about babies thrown off roofs and left in dumpsters that I knew I did not want to use a main character, but rather an everyday thing that might happen to anyone around these girls. But that's the kind of thing these characters deal with.

"I'm using a kind of anti-structure that sometimes comes from what is *not* said or done." —Jim McKay

"There are points in the story where I'm saying 'fuck you' to dramatic structure," admits McKay. "I'm using a kind of anti-structure that sometimes comes from what is *not* said or done." One such omission is the absence of what would normally be a big narrative moment: There is no scene in which Maria tells her suspicious mother about being pregnant. Similarly, in another scene where one girl ends up in the emergency room with an asthma attack, nothing further is made of this.

"Maybe in another [film] she dies," says McKay. "But these characters go through this every three months. The next day nobody even says, 'How are you feeling?' That fucks with your knowledge of reality and your dramatic expectations."

McKay dislikes traditional three-act structure because he believes it inherently denies the truth of the reality-driven stories he tells. "The traditional three-act structure does not accommodate a more realistic style of storytelling because three-act structure is, well, more accessible," says McKay. "But things don't always get patched up and solved in reality. You don't always have a choice about what to do or what happens.

While McKay considers this structure "completely abnormal" in making films about life, he admits that most narrative needs some kind of armature and forward momentum.

"You could probably dissect a Fred Wiseman documentary and find some kind of three-act structure in it. Even *Our Song* can be said to have three acts: Maria telling Lanisha about her pregnancy is probably the end of act one. Act three probably starts when Eleanor jumps off the roof. I find it weird how when you're writ-

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ing a story that no matter what you do, you end up with a three-act structure unless you're trying really, really hard not to. And I was trying really hard not to."

McKay readily admits that *Our Song* could have gone in this direction. "But that would have required some big, big changes that would make this film [be] not this film," he says. "Things like having one of the leads commit suicide, not Eleanor. Maybe another one of the girls would have died of that asthma attack. And both deaths would have taught us something and led to a resolution of a conflict, say, between the one girl who lived and her mother."

Katsapetses also creates structure through character, but by more experimental means—title cards and direct address segments shot on video in which individual characters talk to the audience. "I wrote them on set and then sat down with the actors and shot them right away," he recalls. "The actors never read dialogue until the exact moment we were shooting. I placed the dialogue right at their eye line next to the camera, rolled the film and they did the scene."

The video segments presented another challenge in a film with a freewheeling structure. "I had to really surrender to the idea of repetition," says Katsapetses. "I had to use material interesting enough that the audience would not get bored with that character but would actually look forward to these video shots."

Another anti-narrative device is Katsapetses' use of title cards containing a word or phrase that both introduces a subject and contradicts what the audience sees. "Right at the moment when Tiffany asks her mother if she cut herself by getting drunk and putting her hand down the garbage disposal, the 'Family' card appears," says Katsapetses. "This is their 'family' but it's not 'family' in the traditional narrative sense. Those cards are the most cynical touch of the film. Sometimes the audience adjusts, sometimes it doesn't. But that's okay, because I put them in to make myself happy."

BOTH FILMMAKERS EVENTUALLY DISCOVered that loose narrative boundaries on the page created the possibility for a kind of narrative experimentation in the cutting room that is often impossible. Moving around just one of McKay's key scenes—in which Maria reveals her pregnancy to the

baby's father—had an impact he never fathomed when writing.

"Maria tells Tyrell she's pregnant fairly early in the film," says McKay. "But there was a cut in which that scene was, say, two-thirds toward the end. Just that one scene move completely changed who Maria was. And in its own way, it worked. My distaste for writing to formula gave me incredible editing options."

Letting go of narrative structure led Katsapetses to a new editing technique. By cutting entire chunks out of a scene but never cutting away to another scene, he created the equivalent of dialogue jump cuts. The effect is like an extended monologue with stretches omitted and fragmented and jumpy speech; it creates the impression that the character is interrupting himself or herself, further collapsing linear time and enabling Katsapetses to change narrative direction quickly and suddenly.

"I was actually able to make so many fragmented edits because of the wealth of material," Katsapetses explains. "I discovered I could just cut in and back out of the same scene as many times as I needed to, and I didn't need to replace what I cut with anything else."

Perhaps the most difficult work for any screenwriter is wrapping it all up, deciding when and how a particular story ends. Both McKay and Katsapetses rejected tidy narrative resolution.

"[My ending] is completely unresolved," laughs McKay. "And I didn't want this film to be perceived as a film about a pregnant girl because it's the easiest thing to latch onto. It would be the most clear, typical, accessible story in a way. So when we end, you don't know if Maria is going to have the baby or not for sure. But in a way, that's kind of not the point. I hope you have enough knowledge about her to have your own idea about that."

"I had no idea how my film would end," says Katsapetses. "The honest truth is that I didn't know if those individual stories would come together in any way at all. I had no idea. There was a good eight months before the last scene was shot, after I'd edited everything else together. When we shot the ending, that's when I knew the ending."

Mark J. Huisman is a contributing editor of The Independent *and a New York-based independent producer.*

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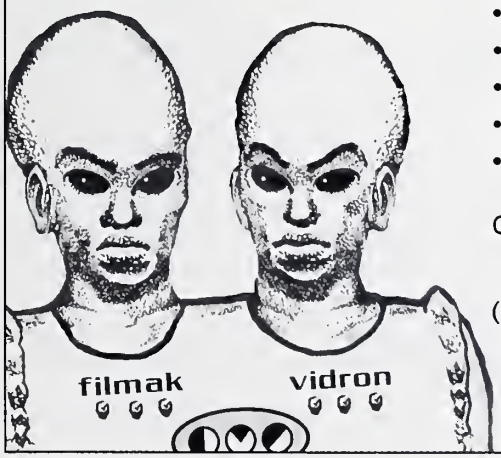
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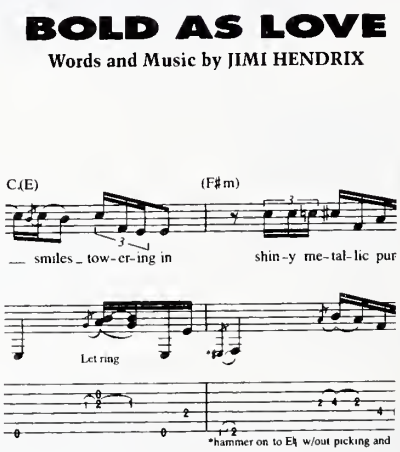
BY DENISE OHIO

YOUR MOVIE IS AT FINE CUT. YOU'RE ALMOST ready for post-audio, and you've found the perfect piece of music, a cut from your favorite CD. But your total music budget is five figures—if you count what's to the right of the decimal point. What can you do?

I'm a big believer in the DIY-style of making movies, but I know better when it comes to music clearances and contracts. Here you need the expertise of an entertainment attorney and at least a basic understanding of the types of licenses required. So here's a primer for those of you ready to face the music.

You Have the Right to an Attorney

This is the first call to make. But even before doing that, you should figure out a few basics. Determine if you'll use the music many times through the movie or just once, and where it comes. For instance, if the music is rolling at the head, it may be construed as a theme song, which costs more. If the music is incidental (as if coming from a jukebox), it may cost less. If you're not using the whole song, be sure to mention that in your negotiations—you can save yourself some money. If you want to use the piece repeatedly throughout your show, that'll probably cost more.



Your lawyer will help you figure out your negotiating terms, such as exclusive versus nonexclusive rights, territories, fee schedules, most favored nations status, and so on. With the changes in markets and outlets, your attorney may suggest that you get a broad grant of rights to cover all markets and any media, including those of the future, as well as the right to incidental use of a song in advertising, trailers, and other promo materials. You'll probably also want the license to be perpetual, especially for a feature. If you can't afford that, talk over some other options, such as getting nontheatrical and festival rights initially, then theatrical and/or television rights if it looks like your project will sell.

Keep asking your lawyer questions until you understand the issues.

Sync and Master

Your lawyer will also tell you that there are two items you need in order to use a song and recording legally: the Synchronization or Sync License and the Master Recording License.

A Sync License pertains to the song itself and is the written authorization to synchronize that song with visual images such as movies, TV, videos, websites, and so on. Sync Rights are usually, though not always, controlled by the music publisher. A Master Recording License pertains to the recording of a performance. Master Use Rights are usually, but not always, controlled by the record label.

You need to find out if the Sync and Master Recording licenses are available for the song you want to use. The first step is to determine who controls the licensing.

The CD, album, cassette, or packaging lists a performance rights organization for the song you want. It will probably be the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), or the Society of European Stage Authors and Composers (SESAC). These organizations don't control the rights, but they can tell you who does. When you call ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC, ask for the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the parties controlling the Sync Rights and the Master Use Rights for the song you need.

Since some copyrights are held by multiple entities, dealing with one agency can be a great timesaver. The Harry Fox Agency, which represents most of the major U.S. publishers, grants both Master Recording and Sync Licenses and collects the fees for them.

Sync It Up

Call the organization controlling the Sync Rights. Ask to speak with someone in Rights, Permissions, or Licensing; each organization has a different name for this department. Write down that person's name. Ask whether the organization controls the Sync Rights and if the Sync License is available. If the answer is yes, you're officially negotiating.

Since there are no set fees or standard practices for Sync Licenses, you can make obscurity and poverty work for you. Tell the publisher's rep that you're an independent producer with an independent flick at fine cut. They'll know immediately that you don't have any money. But that doesn't mean they'll just hang up on you—as everyone in the music business knows, your offer may be the only one for that song in the lifetime of the contract.

This bears repeating: *Your offer may be the only one for that song in the lifetime of the contract.* Don't forget that.

Be ready to tell them your music budget

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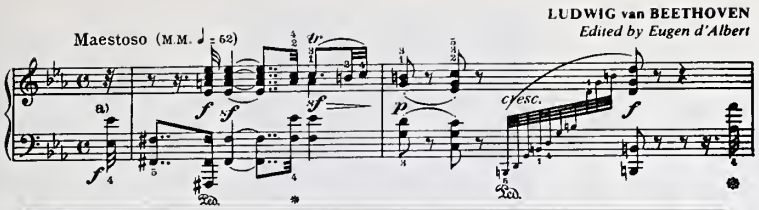
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MASTERING THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

The fact that a song is freely available on the Internet does not guarantee that it is in the public domain. That a song is given away for nothing doesn't guarantee that it is in the public domain. That you can't find a copyright notice doesn't mean that it doesn't have copyright holders. In short: even if you find material that is freely available at no cost and contains no copyright notice, don't assume it is in the public domain.

You must conduct a copyright search. Start with a visit to the U.S. Copyright Office online at www.loc.gov/copyright or at the Library of Congress, James Madison Memorial Building, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20559-6000. For information on searching records from 1790 through 1978, see "How to Investigate the Copyright Status of a Work" (Circular 22) located online at www.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ22.html or http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ22.pdf, and "The Copyright Card Catalog and the Online Files of the Copyright Office" (Circular 23) http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ23.pdf

While public domain status may apply to a song or composition, it may not apply to the recorded performance. For instance, Bach's English Suite in A Major may be in the public domain, but Murray Perahia's recording of it is not. You still need to negotiate for the Master Recording License to that recorded performance. Since Murray Perahia is a great pianist with a worldwide following, you should prepare yourself for sticker shock.

Even if your copyright search is very thorough, the results may not be conclusive. Consult with a copyright attorney before reaching any conclusions regarding the copyright status of a work.

—D.O.

and offer to send a dub of the fine cut. I've found that the smaller labels usually want one. The people at the multinationals can't be bothered, but in the past, they liked it when I offered, because it showed that I had the chutzpah to make a movie for less money than the cookie budget on a typical Hollywood production.

Ask how much the publisher wants for the Sync License. I had one publisher demand three times the entire budget for my feature for three obscure songs by a friend's band. Say thank you, tell them you'll call back after you have spoken with your lawyer and counted your pennies, and *get off the phone.*

Repeat this process for every song you need to clear.

Now, spend a couple days getting over the shock and decide, realistically, what you can afford and what you'll accept. You're a creative person. Use negotiating tools other than cold hard cash: offer to feature the band or artist on your marketing collateral, set up a concert for the world premiere, or get the band's name tattooed on your forehead (not that I'm recommending this).

Once you know what prices you are willing to accept, call them back. Don't drink too much coffee beforehand because perkiness is irritating. Make your counteroffer, and listen to them sputter for a minute. It will happen, because it's that person's job to sputter. Be ready with all the reasons they should agree to your price: prestige of the song in an independent flick, it's such a great fit, your movie will be shown in festivals around the world, whatever. Appeal to the individual's desire to do something cool. Help them say yes.

Don't be afraid to walk away from an agreement that doesn't fit your needs or your budget. Just keep it friendly. They might call back tomorrow to accept your offer. Stranger things have happened. And before accepting anything, remember that one of the best lines you can say in any negotiation is, "Well, I have to talk to my lawyer about that."

Even if you get your Sync License for less than you budgeted, don't start jumping around on the furniture yet. You still need the Master Recording License.

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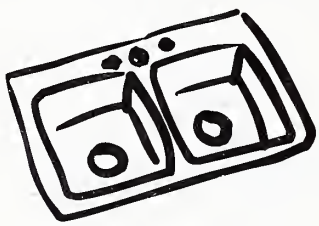
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TECHNIQUE

Yes, Master

Now call the company that controls the Master Use Rights. The problem with Master Recording Licenses is getting them at an affordable price, especially if the recording artist is famous. The record label will argue that the artist is more famous and recognizable than the song (which might be true), and since that's where the value is, that's what you'll pay for.

This is one of the reasons you hear hit songs re-recorded by someone obscure. A producer gets the Sync License, but the Master Recording License is outrageously expensive. So she hires a band to record the song. If you go this route, just be careful about soundalikes. You could be open to charges of voice appropriation claims, such as those from *Bette Midler v. Ford Motor Company*, a case the recording artist won. And make sure you have a written contract with the band you've hired that states you own all the rights to the recording.

When you call the record label, put to use all those skills you acquired getting your show to this point: charm, guts, and an insane level of optimism. Again, your lack of budget can work to your advantage. One record label exec with whom I negotiated decided to sign away the Sync and Master Recording Licenses to four songs for a token $1 each; he figured the production values of my feature were so low, there was no way I'd sell the movie.

Of course, after I hung up the phone, I felt equal parts joy and fury. I had gotten what I wanted, along with a slap to my ego. But he got his comeuppance—my feature, *Amazing World*, was sold to Northern Arts/Naiad eight months later.

If the label isn't budging, use any pull you have with the band, artist, or producer. If they're unhappy, it's in the label's interest to make them happy, so the label may acquiesce now for profits later.

And remember: wear comfortable shoes in case you have to walk away.

The Devil's in the Details

When you get the contracts from the music publisher and record label, have your entertainment attorney read them through and explain every word on every piece of paper. Do not skip this step. Do not ask your Uncle George the litigator or your neighbor Louise who works in tax law to look at these contracts. Get someone who knows his or her way around the entertainment minefield. "Is everything cleared?" is one of the first questions out of distributor's mouth. One whiff of potential litigation, justified or not, will scare them away.

All of your deliverables—payment, music cue sheets, copies of the movie, and so on—will be listed in the contract. Follow through on them conscientiously.

Plan B

If all this seizes you with terror, you have a telephone phobia, or you don't have the time, there is an easier, faster, and more expensive way to obtain music rights. Pay a rights-clearance service or music supervisor. I've heard there are several who do excellent work, though I myself have never done it, since 1) I couldn't afford it; and 2) I didn't want to pass up a chance to further my education.

Think of it this way: someday you'll be on the receiving end of an offer. Since you've learned the basics about intellectual property rights, you can spin sales to your benefit, protect your interests, properly negotiate a deal, and be a better producer. And all those frantic calls to your lawyer will have finally forced you to learn how to program your speed dial.

Denise Ohio is a novelist and writer-producer-director-DP-editor [ohio@holytoledo.com]. Entertainment attorney Neil Sussman [neilsussman@mindspring.com] provided assistance with this article.

IF IT PLAYS, YOU PAYS

In general, any commercial use of a copyrighted work requires permission from the copyright owner. There is no special number of 'free' notes that can be used in a movie without written permission. Anyone who tells you otherwise is just plain wrong.

Documentarians often have questions about "fair use" rights to incidental music. Unless you're an expert in these matters, don't automatically assume your work qualifies. Fair use is the exception, not the rule. An attorney can help you figure out whether your use qualifies.

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"Reproduction of Copyrighted Works by Educators and Librarians" from the U.S. Copyright Office gives an excellent overview of Fair Use policies. You can find it at http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ21.pdf

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VID TRIUMPHS IN T



PROBABLY THE HIGHEST PROFILE ART-STAR OF THE LATE nineties, Matthew Barney was recently the subject of an at least half-serious encomium in *Harpers* magazine, dubbing him the finest exponent of artistic onanism, at least since Caravaggio. Stars of any kind tend to burn brightly and fast, and the tendency of many hotshot artists to turn to the essential medium of celebrity—the movies—is hardly unexpected: think Julian Schnabel, Cindy Sherman, and Richard Longo. But Barney has done his predecessors one step better. Rather than simply declare himself a film director at the height of his career, he built his reputation on the strength of his *Cremaster* series, a group of feature-length film/videos roughly resembling Jean Cocteau via Busby Berkeley. A nifty trick to be sure, but the question remains: since when did moviemaking become the stuff of art galleries?

While video is hardly new to the gallery scene, its recent success certainly is. In the mid-seventies, New York galleries like Castelli-Sonnabend showed videos and films by artists like Vito Acconci and Richard Serra, but made few sales and eventually abandoned the project. Today, galleries are successfully selling tapes by the same artists Castelli was hawking 25 years ago. Chrissie Iles, curator of film and video at the Whitney Museum of American Art, called Castelli a "visionary" and chalked up the failure of his experiment to the fact that collectors in the seventies simply weren't ready to purchase artworks in ephemeral media like film and video.

What's more, advances in video technology have dramatically changed the face of video art. In the seventies, video equipment was crude, clumsy, and expensive. Editing was difficult, picture quality was middling at best, and video projectors were crummy and prohibitively expensive. Tapes were almost always shown on monitors, and duration—the one thing that video was really good at—became a key element of most tapes. One of Castelli's biggest obstacles was no doubt the simple intractability of the medium itself.

Today, cheap and high-quality digital cameras and video projectors make video not only affordable but seductive. Videos are almost always projected and treated as installations, and monitors have acquired a bad rap. In deference to the demands of the gallery setting, most artists have abandoned—or at least modulated—the interest in duration that so dominated video art in the '70s, turning to loops and installation.

And yet, many of the most successful artists are showing long, linear tapes, which work in both galleries and traditional movie theaters. Barney's *Cremaster* films have shown in both galleries and traditional movie theaters like Film Forum in New York City. The Whitney's Iles believes that artists like Barney, Sharon Lockhart, and Shirin Neshat owe their success to their attention to the plastic qualities of film and video, like cinematography, art direction, and composition. Not only has the absolute quality of the image improved since the days of the portapak, but artists have a newfound appreciation for production values, which has prompted many artists to turn to film, despite its frustrating liabilities. Barney goes so far as to transfer his tapes to 35mm for exhibition, and several New York galleries, like Richard Zwirner and Marian Goodman, recently showed very sophisticated 35mm film installations.

Of course, artists who choose to show in galleries have to reconcile themselves to a less focused audience—gallery-goers are free to come and go as they please. But many artists have learned to accept both kinds of viewers—those who watch only a fragment of their tapes, and those with the patience to stay for awhile. While this might be a compromise, it's mitigated by the prospect of unprecedented financial success.

WHILE THE GALLERY MODEL FOR SELLING FILM AND video work is very different from the standard film distribution model, it really isn't all that unfamiliar. Much like limited edition prints, photographs, and artists books, galleries sell films and videos in limited editions (often three), with the artist retaining one copy called an "artist's proof." In a gesture to installation, the purchase price sometimes includes video hardware, and artists almost always include specific presentation instructions, but this often amounts to no more than the proper size of the room and wall the tape is to be projected on.

Rosalie Benitez of the Barbara Gladstone Gallery (which represents artists Matthew Barney, Vito Acconci, Rosemarie Trockel, Shirin Neshat, and Gary Hill, among others) described the standard procedure for selling video art as follows: "Single-channel works are editioned and certificated. In the case of a

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EO

HE GALLERIES

BY BRIAN FRYE



The cavalry walks on water in Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 2*.

sale, a specific edition number is sold to a client—i.e., edition number 6 of 10 of a particular work would be clearly indicated on the work itself, as with any multiple edition artwork, and certificated accordingly. Obviously, and following copyright laws, a work may not be reproduced or in any way duplicated by the owner."

The model is not perfectly transferable. Unlike editioned work in photography or etching, for instance, where a collector clearly purchases a physical object, it is not entirely clear whether a collector of video art purchases a videotape or its contents. This question would be an academic, were it not for the fact that videotapes are fragile and become entirely useless—and presumably valueless—when the tape is damaged.

Museums and galleries have only recently begun to address the problems inherent to collecting unstable media like film and video. For example, a collector recently donated a limited edition of two films by Walter de Maria to the Whitney Museum, which have faded entirely to red and can no longer be shown. As the original negative of the film is now missing, the artwork is effectively lost. Unlike other editioned media, in which the value of the object depends upon the disposal of the master materials after striking an artificial number of copies, the longevity of a film or video depends upon the preservation of masters, as the works themselves degrade in presentation.

Iles proposed a model for the sale of videos and films that would resemble the one developed for minimal art and sculpture. Like a collector of Sol LeWitt's wall drawings, which consist of a set of instructions that anyone can execute, or Dan Flavin's light sculptures, which consist of carefully placed florescent light fixtures, the collector of video art would purchase not a physical tape but a certificate conferring the right to strike a copy from the master as necessary.

But this revolution has its discontents. In their tape *Untitled #29.95*, recently released by the Internet prank brokers ®™ark, the anonymous Video Aktivists present a blistering and intermittently humorous critique of what they consider video in service of big money. Tracing the history of video art from the conceptual and performance artists of the sixties and seventies through the activist video of the eighties and early nineties, *Untitled #29.95* contends that turning a video into a saleable commodity perverts its egalitarian essence. The tape ends with clips from recent videos by Matthew Barney (*Cremaster*) and Lucy Gunning (*The Horse Impressionists* and *Climbing Around My Room*), taped surreptitiously in the galleries where they were exhibited, their asking prices—ranging from $25,000 to $300,000—prominently displayed. In the spirit of Robin Hood, ®™ark [www.rtmark.com] generously offers to sell full-length bootleg versions of these tapes for the comparatively reasonable price of $29.95.

But nonprofit distributors are already doing much the same thing. Even artists lucky enough to have gallery representation don't eschew the traditional film and video distribution models entirely, often distributing their tapes through nonprofit organizations like Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI). "Since EAI is a nonprofit, we don't deal with editioned tapes; the primary issue for us is access," says Galen Joseph-Hunter, EAI's digital media coordinator. While the rental price EAI charges for a tape—$50-$75—is a fraction of what galleries charge to purchase editioned versions, they maintain cordial relations, even passing tapes back and forth. Artist Alix Pearlstein believes that rather than placing a premium on scarcity, collectors ought to think of the reproducible nature of film and video as a strength. According to Pearlstein, distribution helps, rather than hurts gallery owners and collectors as "the more a piece becomes a part of people's shared experience, the more valuable it becomes."

So what of ®™ark's critique? On a gut level, it's sympathetic, but unfortunately glosses over the hard economic questions at stake. There's nothing inegalitarian about artists selling their work at market value. And there's no need to liberate these tapes from wealthy people, as anyone can see them for free in galleries and museums, or rent them inexpensively through nonprofit distributors. Ultimately, selling experimental film and video through a gallery might offer another option to artists who have depended for years on unpredictable, beleaguered bureaucracies for funding. For all the good that organizations like the NEA, NYSCA, and the Rockefeller Foundation do, few artists can depend on them. And as detestable as the market can be, many wouldn't mind seeing a few of those IPO dollars trickle down into the pockets of some film- and videomakers.

Brian Frye is a filmmaker, curator, and freelance writer currently living in New York City.

MAKING A SCENE WITH

Live Video

BY LAURA U. MARKS



Those wild and crazy guys of Stackable Thumb, Naval Cassidy (with glasses) and Valued Cu$tomer, whose live video works are more like vaudeville performances. The duo employ a combination of smells and sounds as well as visual images, utilizing analog and low-end digital technology—security and Internet cameras, VCRs, video switchers designed for wedding photography, and obsolete Amiga computers—to generate video effects live.

YOU ARE IN A DIM ROOM IN A Toronto gallery, lying on a sprawling beanbag chair that must be two meters long, and gazing up at a screen. A strange little character, emitting wordless cries, stumbles across a sort of brightly colored postapocalyptic landscape. It must be a science fiction movie! But wait: every time the forms on screen shift, the music hums and twitters in sympathy: it's a melodrama!

The answer to what kind of movie you are watching lies in a studio in Brooklyn, where a collection of food wrappers, twine, labels, and styrofoam peanuts is blowing around on a huge round table. With no human present, computer-driven cameras switch among views of the trash, and simple software analyzes its movement to generate sounds that seem to correspond to the images. The same software, programmed by the invisible artists of this piece, edits views of the trash in shot-reverse shot rhythms that seem to come straight out a daytime soap opera. A live Internet feed streams the images and sounds to where you are lounging in Toronto, and it is you who are projecting characters, motivations, and genre styles on these innocent bits of refuse.

The piece, called The Appearance Machine, is the work of longtime collaborators Willy Le Maitre and Eric Rosenzweig. It is one of the exciting manifestations of a recent development in low-tech digital media, in which artists take advantage of commercial platforms, prosumer mixing boards, and developments in digital cinema to mix video live. Live video performances draw variously on DJ- and VJ-style mixing, free jazz, vaudeville, and avant-garde performance art. Production has skyrocketed in recent months, as digital mixing equipment becomes more affordable and artist-programmers develop software. The four artist teams examined in this article are Screen (Le Maitre and Rosenzweig), Stackable Thumb (Jonathan Giles a.k.a. Naval Cassidy and Benton Bainbridge a.k.a. Valued Cu$tomer), Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, and Animal Charm (Rich Bott and Jim Fetterley). Their low-end extravaganzas make use of sampling, improvisation, homemade platforms, trash props, and the artists' own bodies to produce unique audiovisual "concerts." Image feeds are synthesized live and projected, or translated in real time into other sorts of information that affect the multisensory spectacle. Live video is an interesting intervention in the virtual or simulacral quality of digital cinema, for it can only exist live; live-to-tape video documents are just that. These works' "content" is obsolescence and cultural detritus: they recycle castoff images from commercial culture, as well as real trash.

Live video is an offshoot of the general resurgence of performance video. If you take a look at the output of MFA programs in recent years, you'll see many works that look like they could have been produced in 1972, except for that giveaway digital shimmer: single-shot sight gags for camera; intimate, improvised performances; feedback experiments that take advantage of machine randomness. Paradoxically, now that digital cam-

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ARTISTS

eras, editing, and effects are giving almost unlimited control to artists, it seems that many are choosing to give up their control. Instead, they allow the live event, or the whims of the medium (whims that must be assiduously programmed back into control-freak editing software), to determine the look and feel of their final project. While commercial and high-end art applications use digital technology in cinema to increase the filmmaker's control of the spectacle, live video uses computers to emphasize the role of chance. This is a hands-off aesthetics.

First wave live video

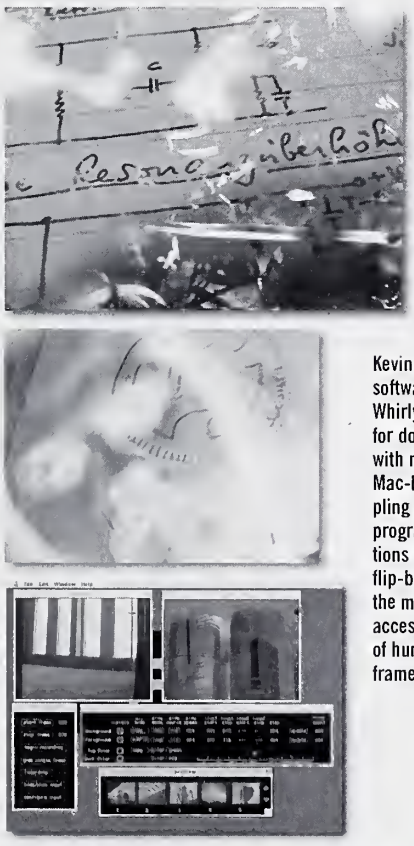
Many live video artists consciously seek their roots in the analog experiments of the knob-twiddling early '70s. Benton Bainbridge of Stackable Thumb writes, "When I and my cohorts leaped into the live video thing as the '90s kicked off, we had the same conviction that cinema was a performable medium, but little knowledge of our predecessors. In the postmodern '80s, the abstract qualities of the medium—a fundamental issue to wrestle with when trying to 'play' video in concert with others—was not really up for discussion." But when video was young, many artist/scientists ignored the event in front of the camera in favor of the loopy effects that could be achieved by manipulating the electronic signal. The Paik-Abe Synthesizer may be one of the best remembered, but artists speak fondly of (and still use) other analog synthesizers like the Jones Colorizer, the Rutt-Etra Video Synthesizer, and the Sandin Image Processor. The Experimental Television Center in Owego, New York, is home to many of these "obsolete" computers, and video artists who have done residencies there take advantage of the rich and varied effects to make idiosyncratic and complex works. Peer Bode, a former director of the ETC, and Andrew Deutsch now oversee analog-digital miscegenations at Alfred University's Institute of Electronic Arts.

Pioneer live video artists Carol Goss and William Wright, interviewed in 1998 by Bainbridge, describe their experiments in the early '70s that share many concerns of contemporary live video. (The fascinating full text of the interview is on the Pulsating OKAY! website, www.p-o-k.com.) Goss describes the intuitive leap into the void that is live improvisation: "The sense of form of a piece was something that everybody was breathing together." They speak especially fondly of the Jones Colorizer, which mixed signals from four black-and-white Portapak cameras with separate red, blue and green color controls. It must be noted that analog synthesis is cumbersome—Goss and Wright admitted that it took "about 18 hours" to set up the equipment—and that these experiments with live generation and synthesis are harder to carry out with sound than image. Jonathan Giles of Stackable Thumb notes that, short of using turntables, he could not mix sound live without a digital audio sampler. "I would have to create all the sound on 1/4" reel-to-reel, and cut and paste it by hand—not suited for fast-paced live work."

Like their analog predecessors, live video artists tip their hats not to film or video art but to improvised music. Eric Rosenzweig comes to live video from free improvised music. Jonathan Giles, although he has an experimental filmmaking background, is the music-generating half of Stackable Thumb. The McCoys perform with musicians from the "art" side, like Pauline Oliveros, Steina Vasulka, and Peer Bode, as well as experimental electronica DJs like Soundlab, DJ Spooky, Nerve, and DJ Anna Lee (with whom they mixed at the New York Underground Film Festival). The basic principles that structure improvised music allow musicians to generate new sounds and rhythms in the freedom of the moment. Kevin McCoy writes similarly of the live video event: "a flow of images and/or sounds the sequence and structure of which emerge 'immanently' and instantly." Live video gives up tight control of image and sound editing and content in favor of the surprising relationships that result from chance encounters. As with improvised music, it's the responsibility of listeners or viewers to create meanings, if they want to, or to enjoy the image/sound flow and groove on how the artists handle their instruments.

Against virtuality

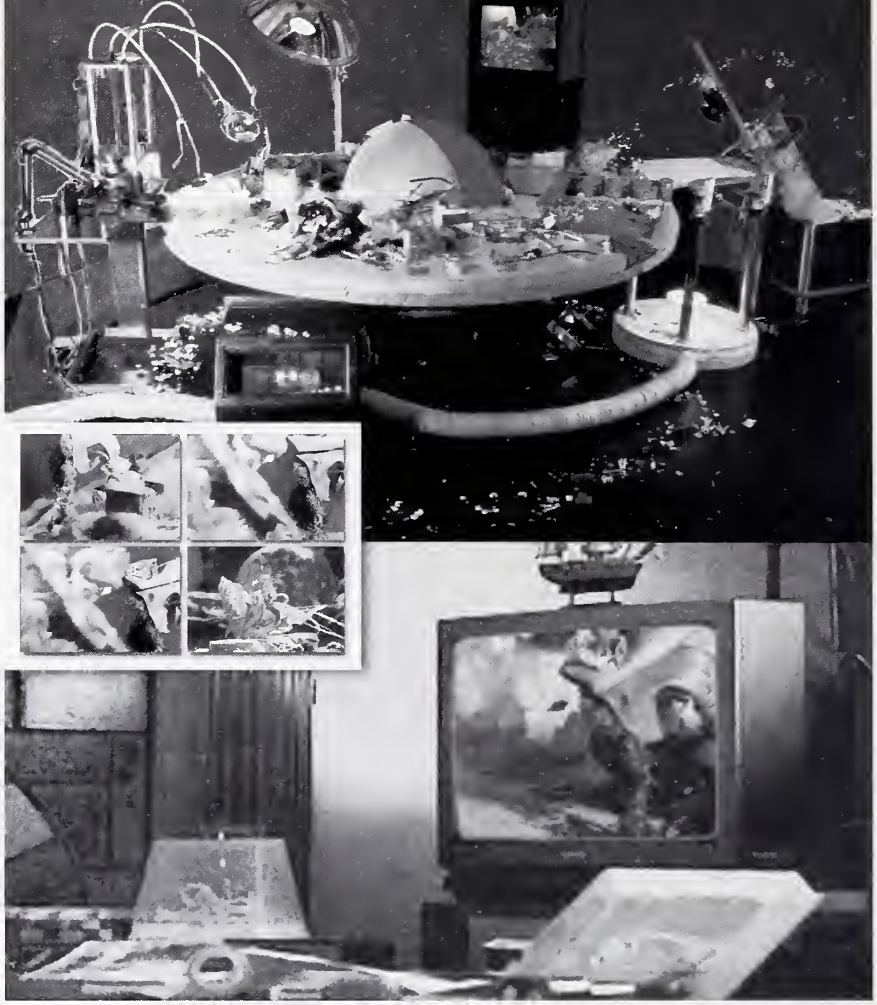
By popular accounts, digitization is taking audiovisual media (at least for us in the wealthy countries) from the physical, substantial stages of movie theaters and television sets to the seemingly weightless, immaterial space of so-called virtuality. The myth of virtuality—the search for the seamless human-computer interface—is of course in the interests of global corporations Microsoft, Adobe, Sony, et al., which encourage computer users continually to upgrade our hardware and software and rudely abandon us when instead we make do with obsolete platforms. Many makers of digital media fall into the upgrade trap. But the live video artists embrace an aesthetics of appropriate, rather than high, technology. By appropriate technology, I mean technology that's no more sophisticated than necessary to do the job: a twig for eating ants (if you're a primate), a bicycle for getting around the city (if you're a human), an obsolete



Kevin McCoy's software program Whirlygig, designed for doing live mixes with musicians, is a Mac-based sampling and mixing program that functions like a giant flip-book, allowing the mix artist to access a database of hundreds of frames.

Amiga for generating video effects live (if you're Stackable Thumb). Live video artists can thus be seen in light of the materialist politics that media theorist Sean Cubitt calls "digital aesthetics." Cubitt believes that global corporations are infinitely capable of incorporating resistance, and that their conquest of everyday life is aided by digital technologies. If it can be digitized, it can be assimilated, is the essence of his argument. He calls for social alternatives grounded in the materiality of specific human-machine interfaces. Physical materiality—the analog side of digital life—is hard to assimilate.

Live video performances are chock-full of digital aesthetic values, because they do not try to hide their material construction, the social relationships that produced their technology, the economics of their low-tech platforms, and the quirkiness of their human-computer interfaces. Like all software, their applications are developed/pirated from military and commercial uses. Yet while the latter attempt to hide their technology behind a smoothly functioning interface, artists' live mixing platforms make the interface tangible, always reminding viewers of how the images and sounds are actually produced. Software is available for live image and sound mixing (for example, the Dutch company Steim develops software for electronic musicians and sponsors artists to experiment with their products: see www.steim.nl/products.html), but a number of artists cobble together their own homemade hardware-software platforms. Stackable Thumb's video is a combination of analog and low-end digital technology: security cameras, camcorders, VCRs, and video switchers designed for wedding videography. They do not rely on digital video effects or any heavily processed computer imagery and have largely shunned the more recent platforms and software. Bainbridge writes, "We like the old stuff, particularly Amigas [the extinct Commodore computer], because Amigas remain much more responsive and reliable than Macs and Wintel machines running 10-50 times faster!"



Screen's The Appearance Machine utilizes a set of computer-driven cameras trained on food wrappers, twine, labels, styofoam peanuts, and other trash blowing around on a huge round table. Simple software analyzes the trash's movement to generate sounds, while automated editing apes the rhythms of pop TV and Hollywood.

Other live video artists use homemade software to produce their own platforms. Homemade software is the digital equivalent to of hand-processing film instead of sending it to a lab: if you are willing to make do with a less seamless final product, you can bend the rules on how to create it. Jennifer and Kevin McCoy's video installations and performances produce a live mix of prerecorded and appropriated images with Kevin McCoy's program Whirlygig, a sampling and mixing program for the Mac. The software functions "like a giant flip book," allowing the mix artist to access a database of hundreds of frames. McCoy stresses the musical, rather than cinematic, basis of the platform: "Whirlygig is a tool for doing live mixes with musicians and DJs. I've tried to match the formal language of electronic, mix-based music with my software: scratching, sampling, layering, looping, speed control, etc."

The most sophisticated variant of homemade programming belongs to those interactive media artists who are developing or adapting translation platforms, which digitize information in order to convert it from one modality to another: to generate sound from image, for example, or images from words. One of the most popular is The Very Nervous System developed by Toronto artist David Rokeby to analyze video frames and convert light patterns into a database of information. The user can then translate that information into another modality. (For more on the VNS, see www.interlog.com/~drokeby.) In their ongoing project called Fleabotics, LeMaitre and Rosenzweig use the VNS to generate sound from the live-video image. Using Max MIDI-based live music software, they program sounds to respond to the image's rhythms and shifts in brightness.

So how does live video look, sound, and feel?

LeMaitre and Rosenzweig recently completed the newest iteration of Fleabotics in The Appearance Machine, the hands-off movie-making engine described at the beginning of this article. This massive Lautréamont-like installation of video cameras, motors, discarded medical equipment, and trash produces video in a huge feedback loop so the artists need not intervene once

it is set up. Fleabotics itself is a series of "nonintentional dramas" in which settings and characters are constituted entirely of trash—food wrappers, product packaging, and other refuse from the world of low-end commerce. The resulting movies are entrancing and can be experienced for hours.

The Appearance Machine is its own metteur-en-scène as well as its own editor. The artists use the Very Nervous System to convert the video images into instructions to fans, vibrators, and other motors that move the trash around to create a new setting. The image of a "character"—a machine-generated spew of small bits of trash—is keyed into the "landscape" image at regular intervals. Scene changes are elicited by a feed from network television. Such cinematic conventions keep this work looking eerily like a real movie, but the crux of its movielikeness is atmospheric music worthy of Douglas Sirk. Visual rhythms and intensities generate audible rhythms and pitches that seem to be emitted by the objects themselves: they seem to squeal, hum, converse, and be accompanied by mood music and sound effects.

Yet it is all structured by chance. It is viewers themselves who attribute agency and character to these quivering bits of detritus. When I first saw Fleabotics, I was sure it was a blurry version of a nature documentary on pollination, and the artists tell of one performance in which a spectator, who had heard a detailed explanation of the random generation of the images, nevertheless remarked at the end, "It was very interesting, but why did you make the woman in the last scene Asian?"

In past versions, such as a show at The Kitchen in New York last year (pictured, p.36), The Appearance Machine has been present in the same room where the resulting work was projected. More recently, The Appearance Machine is based physically in a studio in Brooklyn, which is not generally open to the public, and streamed in more or less real time over the Internet. It returns to physicality as a live feed on a monitor far away—recently at the artist-run center InterAccess in Toronto, soon at the Wexner Center in Ohio. In what I think is Le Maitre and Rosenzweig's generous acknowledgement of the difference between virtual and physical space, viewers are given an enormous bean bag pad to lounge on while they take in the work.

Jennifer and Kevin McCoy do VJ-style live mixes of prerecorded and plundered video. The musical format of their Whirlygig software results in images that are painterly and abstract, their mass-media content almost obscured. Interestingly, their work for the web is also live mix. Their web site [www.Airworld.net] is stylishly ambiguous, like many of those mysterious e-commerce sites that give you no idea what they're actually selling. Airworld is programmed to search the web on buzzwords and download images and text from corporate web sites into their own, changing all company names to Airworld, so indeed it looks like you could join the Airworld company, invest in Airworld stock, fly Airworld airlines, and purchase Airworld hair products. In a recent performance, Airworld Tonight, they keyed their own newscasters over live feeds from Bloomberg financial news, with their own economic analysis, then re-sent the mix as a low-power pirate TV signal. While web work is beyond the scope of this article, the potential to mix live feeds and re-send the processed information makes the web a live video engine par excellence.

Animal Charm invites guests to bring tapes to their "video kitchens", which they mix up on the spot: in Surrealist fashion, the emerging content is the unanticipated meetings between unknown objects. Many of their live-mixed works are also screened as single-channel tapes. This Chicago-based duo of Rich Bott and Jim Fetterley make "scratch" videos (again the term refers to DJ techniques) of the trashiest of trashy images. Their content includes QVC ads for jewelry and desk accessories, infomercials for easy-install tennis courts (*Family Court*) and insurance (*Preserve Your Estate*), an early-80s TV documentary on a San Diego city administrator (*Mark Roth*). I think of these images as the kind that, beaming into space, will first give news of life on Earth to creatures on other planets. Animal Charm's uncanny works give new, zombie-like life to images meant to exist only in the present and then disappear in the amnesia of commercial culture.



Animal Charm invites guests to bring tapes to their "video kitchens" for a Surrealist-inspired live mix. The unexpected results give new life to commercials and infomercials.

The most exuberantly live of all live video works I know are those by Stackable Thumb. Their events are more like concerts, or as they say, vaudeville shows, than video projections. Perhaps this reflects these artists' relative analog bias. In performance, Valued Cu$tomer and Naval Cassidy perform manic actions, such as burning small objects or destroying them on a grinding machine. At the same time they use tiny Internet cameras to shoot close-ups of these actions, their own bodies, and a dizzying array of trash props. (Like Rosenzweig and Le Maitre, they jealously guard their garbage collection and bring it to each performance; this can create problems at international borders.) Thus the performance is already quite heady even before images are projected, and even includes an olfactory dimension when they burn plastic or grind desiccated citrus fruit. The resulting images are synthesized and mixed live using the aforementioned low-end synthesizers and wedding video switchers. At the same time music is mixed and performed live using a digital audio sampler.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

IT'S GOOD TO GET OUT

A ROUNDTABLE ON EXPERIMENTAL FILM DISTRIBUTION

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

EXPERIMENTAL FILM GOT A BIG NOD OF RECOGNITION THIS YEAR when the Sundance Film Festival introduced a shorts program to its Frontier sidebar (itself only five years old). With this gesture, Sundance finally acknowledged the fact that experimental filmmakers rarely make feature-length work. Though there are a few whose works pass the 60-minute mark (including James Benning, Claire Denis, Jesse Lerner, and Juan Carlos Rulfo in this year's line-up), most experimental makers keep it short. Now with the Frontier shorts program, the racy collaged animations of Martha Colburn, the optically altered horror films in Peter Tscherkassky's *Outer Space*, and the S/M scenario of Jennifer Todd Reeves and M.M. Serra's *Darling International*, to name a few, all found their way into the country's highest visibility film festival.

The Independent corralled all the Frontier filmmakers present during the festival's second half for a lively roundtable discussion about the distribution of experimental work. Around the table were:

- *Jesse Lerner*, at Sundance with his feature-length film *Ruins*, a mock documentary that weaves colonialism, archeology, and art forgery in Latin America into a challenging look at the creators of 'truth' and history;
- *Jay Rosenblatt*, who was presenting two shorts—*Restricted*, a one-minute (non)motivational film; and *King of the Jews*, a provocative meditation on the Jewishness of Christ;
- *Rolf Gibbs*, whose short G shows what it's like to plummet six miles to earth (this was accompanied by *Falling*, a making-of film by Aaron Rhodes, shown down the street at the Digidance Film Festival);
- *Reynold Reynolds* and *Patrick Jolley*, who collaborated on a 10-minute short *The Drowning Room*, an elliptical soap opera that was shot entirely underwater.

Let's start with one of the big stories at Sundance this year, which is the high visibility of dotcoms. Has their existence and demand for short films made any difference to you so far? Are streaming web sites a distribution avenue you're looking forward to, or just another way of showing your work and not getting paid?

Rolf Gibbs: I've been looking into this in a very detailed way, because I've been negotiating with AtomFilms for a year. They've just signed for all of my films.

Are they going to curate a Rolf Gibbs package?

Gibbs: They're doing that for the first time, which was one of their ways of convincing me that they were taking it seriously. But for me, they're a distribution company before anything else. They're not necessarily [just] a web site. And they won't put things on their web site until they've exhausted all exclusivity possibilities, because that first time of showing a film on the web or on TV is when it has the most value. So by putting it on their own site, they would be wasting a possible sale. For instance, HBO wouldn't buy a film if it had been on the web before.

Would they do it simultaneously?

Gibbs: No. Whoever buys it first will want to have exclusivity for a period of time. So there's that side of it.

Then all the other dotcoms, the offers are generally pretty nebulous. You're offered things like 'back end on sales that are made during the time they are watching your film.' Work it out; I don't know. [*laughs*] Then you get a certain percentage of whatever that sale was. Or 'exposure' is the big buzzword that people try to hide behind. Again, if you think about exclusivity, if you have anything of any value, it will kill it.

Can you discuss what Atom is offering you? What's the deal structure?

Gibbs: Percentage-wise, it seems low. I'm not allowed to talk about the numbers. But you have to take into account it's from the gross, which is a rather original way of calculating things, so they're not charging you for tapes and going to festivals and all those things—which, for most distribution companies, takes up everything they owe you. So it's on a gross. Atom has several different markets, and they've actually created markets.

Such as?

Gibbs: They've sold short films to airlines in ways that people haven't done before. They're even getting blanket deals with shopping malls.

Reynold Reynolds: They're not getting on the airlines. They're just saying this stuff. This whole talk that they're going to sell these short films and everyone's going to make some money is [ridiculous].

Gibbs: Well, actually, I know of cases. They sold recently a package of seven shorts for $200,000 for a four-month thing, and that's not bad.

Reynolds: How much did your film cost? Did you make back the cost of the film?

Gibbs: What are you trying to say?

Reynolds: That they don't have anything but talk.

Gibbs: After having spent an extremely difficult year talking to them, I'm convinced the other way. [*General commotion*]

Jesse Lerner: I don't like it. Not if you're talking about $1,500 for ownership of something. I consider the work I'm doing a piece of art, and if they're going to own it for $1,500 for two years.

Gibbs: They don't own it; they license it. If that's a concern, a filmmaker should either go to a company offering nonexclusive deals or try to negotiate a bail-out clause.



THE FAB FIVE: Rolf Gibbs, Reynold Reynolds, Jay Rosenblatt, Patrick Jolley, and Jesse Lerner at Sundance 2000.

Do they have exclusive rights during this period?

Gibbs: Everything but videograms, which has to do with DVDs or videotapes or CD-ROMs.

And they're trying to sell to the European market?

Gibbs: Absolutely. They have an office in London, and all they do is sell to world TV. [*Ed.:* As this issue went to press, Atom made its first sale of G. to a major computer company's web site—a remarkable $10,000 for one month.]

I think Atom is fairly unique within the web world, insofar as it's trying to act as both a web distributor and a regular distributor.

Jay Rosenblatt: I think it's important to call these places 'sales agents' rather than 'distributors', because a distributor will actually rent your film and do small venues. These folks, I think, are trying to make deals with television, bigger deals, and then they take a cut and give you a cut. So it's a little misleading to call them distributors, because I don't think they really distribute your film except via broadcast. They use that word, but it's really different from a Canyon Cinema or New Day Films. *Those* are distributors.

So what's your reading on the web as an opportunity?

Lerner: I haven't had a lot of experience working with the companies that you're discussing. Most of what I've seen seems like it's turning into this strip mall, that's completely privatized and oriented more towards selling commodities. There's not a lot of space for this other type of work. I'd like to see that change, but I'd be happy if the web weren't completely privatized and turned over to commercial interests.

For short filmmakers, the web is at an interesting point in time. The distribution of feature films over the web is still not a practical reality. So we're occupying a small window of time—a pre-broadband moment—during which shorts are the sought-after film form. Everyone wants them. But just how adventurous are these companies? Are they simply going after short fiction narratives and animations? Or are they looking for a diverse range of work, including experimental works like yours?

Reynolds: *Frog in a Blender*. That's Atom's number one film. Put a frog in a blender. The films that they like are the ones that attract attention. They're not going to display a piece of art. That's just so *bland*. Their whole objective is very commercial and very sensational. I don't think that really pertains to experimental work.

Rosenblatt: It seems like they're into acquiring. The names [they get] can raise more capital. That's how it seems to me. I've gotten so many faxes from different companies, and they're really energetic, and they usually use that line, "This will be great exposure." They don't even want to talk beyond that. When you start asking specifics, they start going, "Well, you know, we're new. And we do *plan* on doing that. Our next step."

Gibbs: The other thing I hear every time—and every time I hear this word, I'm completely uninterested—is, "We've got this thing going on that's really *exciting*." It means there's nothing happening at all.

Can you imagine distributors like Canyon or others who focus on experimental work utilizing the web and video streaming in a way that makes sense to you? Or can you imagine putting your work up on one of those newer sites that showcase experimental work, but aren't commercial ventures and offer no payment? Is there any value in putting your work up on the web just for visibility?

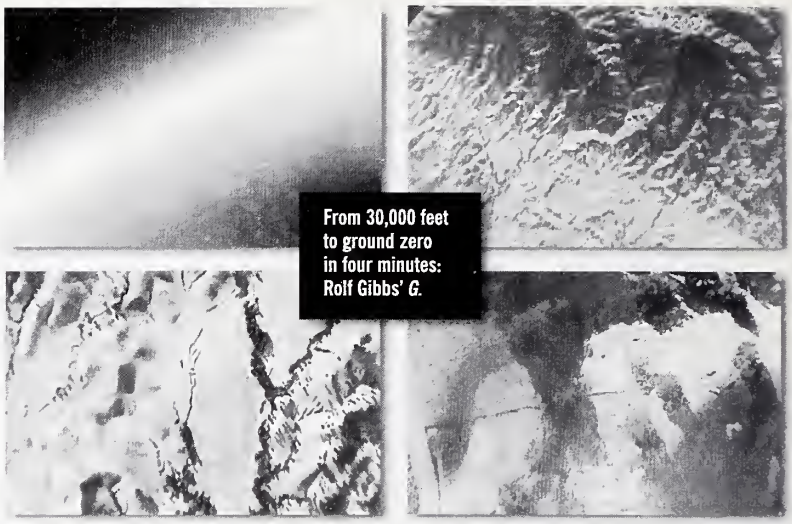
Gibbs: If there is some kind of monetary value to your film, that would diminish it. I would love to have it shown all over the place, but I would also like to get some of the budget back.

Lerner: The really, to use your favorite word, *exciting* things on the web aren't coming from the dotcoms. Projects like ®™ark, a parody of corporate structure for subversive purposes, is much more interesting than anything that Atom Films or even these old celluloid distributors are doing on the web. ®™ark is coming out of a digital sensibility.

Reynolds: Right now the resolution and sound is so bad, if someone thinks they've seen your film and it's two inches by three inches and the sound is out of computer speakers, they've missed it. They haven't seen the film. It makes me nervous if people tell me, "Oh, I don't want to go to a screening; I'll just look it up on the web."

Rosenblatt: Going back to your question, the thing I find interesting and amusing is that this is the first time shorts have anything over features. [*all laugh*]. I find it interesting that they're

courting short filmmakers. I've never seen that, and I've been coming to Sundance for a long time. Here you're always a second-class citizen. Not that that's changed, but it's interesting that there's actually a market. And as soon as there's money involved, all of a sudden the different journals are writing about it, *Variety* and all that. There's actually some attention being paid to shorts. So even though there's all this downside, which I completely agree with, the positive thing is, shorts are getting a little bit more attention; even if they're not marketable and not commercial, they're on people's minds, because of the financial part of it.



From 30,000 feet to ground zero in four minutes: Rolf Gibbs' *G.*

Gibbs: I've noticed in the last few years that people on the streets and people I know are using the word 'short' in a way they haven't before and are aware of short films, even if they haven't seen many. They know that they should, or they're missing something.

Rosenblatt: I think that's going to create an audience. That's the positive thing.

What have you found to be the best way to get your films out into the world? With feature-length narratives and documentaries, there's a more clear-cut path: You attend certain film festivals, look for a sales agent, target specific distributors. Is the path any different for nontraditional or experimental films?

Patrick Jolley: Winning at festivals helps a lot. I won a prize at the Cork Film Festival, and because it won, it was included in a package of four or five short films which they then sent to a lot of other festivals.

Did the package or individual works get beyond the festival circuit?

Jolley: So far sales have been zero. It did have a couple of television screenings.

And you didn't get paid for those?

Jolley: No. It was on Irish television, RTE, and Televisa in Mexico.

Gibbs: Who did the deal, man?

Jolley: Me! [*laughs*] I figure should talk to you a little bit after this.

Gibbs: Ask them for money, and then ask them again.

Jolley: Well, it wasn't a straight, "Now we're going to show the film." It was part of this magazine program—part interviews, part screenings.

Let's talk about specific festivals. In your experience, is it better to take an experimental film to specialized festivals, like the Ann Arbor Film Festival or a shorts festival, or to a festival like Sundance that is targeted to the industry and includes more mainstream kinds of films? What has worked best for you?

Gibbs: Sundance is the festival in the States that gets everybody else interested. If you go to Sundance, you don't have to think about other festivals too much, because they'll come to you. You don't have to pay entry fees, if you ask not to. Also in terms of an awareness from one's peers—and that being not just experimental filmmakers, but the film business.

Outside of America, Berlin has been the best for me. The Panorama section takes extremely daring stuff. They're about to show G. All the other festivals go to Berlin to look for work; also TV buyers. So those two festivals for me have the most effect over the year.

Rosenblatt: I'm very pleased with Sundance this year having the Frontier shorts, and it's my understanding they're going to continue this. I think it's going to put Sundance on the map in the experimental world. Up to this point, it hasn't been. They've shown the isolated experimental short, but now there's a place for it, and I commend them.

Festivals are a good way in. It gives you a little more cachet with sales agents, with distributors, especially if you've won some awards. For me, the most fulfilling thing in getting the work out there has been marketing it educationally to universities and libraries, and knowing that if you have a film that has any kind of educational value, even artistic educational value, that it could be used year in and year out in classes, and be discussed. That has been really fulfilling.

Do you have a distributor for the educational market or do you do it yourself?

Rosenblatt: I do self-distribution.

Why?

Rosenblatt: A good friend of mine, Ellen Bruno, turned me on to it. She's a great filmmaker. It takes a little bit of work, but once you get it going, you just have to do a mailing every semester. That takes some work, but you're going to put a lot more energy and care into your film than anybody else is. So that's one reason. The other is, you're going to get most of the [financial] benefits from it. Or else take the loss. So there's a risk.

You make it sound so simple. But getting the mailing list, finding which teachers in which departments, which media buyers...

Rosenblatt: You buy the labels from a label company, based on the departments you're interested in. You have a fulfillment

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house. You have someone who prints the cards. I think it's a very empowering thing, and I recommend it to every filmmaker who thinks they have a chance of getting their work into the educational market.

Then with television, of course—cable, European TV—you're going to reach a wider audience and hopefully get some money back to pay off your debts.







[clockwise from top left] Reynolds and Jolley's *The Drowning Pool,* a soapless soap opera filmed entirely underwater. Don't run with false idols: Lerner's mockumentary *Ruins.* Rosenblatt's *King of the Jews* walks well-trodden soil.

Do you sell to them or do you get a foreign sales agent?

Rosenblatt: I've done both. I've sometimes tried it on my own, just a little bit. Let's put it this way, if your film does really well on the festival circuit, you're already making a lot of contacts and people already know about it, so the sales agent isn't as important. They do have contacts that you don't have. But I like to at least try a few of the contacts I make.

Do you cherry pick and go for something like UK/Channel 4 first?

Rosenblatt: I send it to the ones that pay best first.

Doesn't that jeopardize your chances of getting a foreign sales agent later?

Rosenblatt: No, you just take off that territory. On the last film I made, I took off Spain, because I made a deal with Canal Plus Spain. A film before that, I did most of the work and then the sales came in, [even though] I already had a sales agent.

Gibbs: I would agree with that. All of my 15 country sales have been passive, meaning that television companies have approached me after festivals. So that's relatively easy to do. You just have to respond to what comes to you.

Do you use a fulfillment house, or do you take care of all the shipping and invoicing yourself?

Gibbs: No, I did it myself. It became a bit of a pain. If you have more than one film, that becomes more and more complicated. And there's that thing, when you are doing it passively, you ask yourself if you are doing it well enough, and should you be targeting people more.

What about niche festivals—those targeted to experimental work, or ethnic work, or shorts. Are they worth it?

Rosenblatt: Yes. I thought we were talking more about making a living and visibility. But in terms of true fulfillment, the niche festivals have cultivated the audience that really appreciates your work. There's nothing better than that—to be at a film festival with an audience that maybe knows your work already, is really excited to see what you've done, or if they don't know your work, just totally appreciates your work, dialogues with you, and just gets it. So those festivals have a great place, definitely, in terms of the art end.

Lerner: I've had great experiences at documentary festivals like Nyon, or experimental or Latino festivals. By all means I'd recommend those festivals.

Would you postpone these appearances in order to get into a Sundance or Berlin?

Lerner: I don't know if this is wise, but I'm not picky. If somebody wants to show it in the back room of their café in Jalapa, I'll send it there. If they want me to send it to Sundance, that's fine, too. But I don't wait. When I finish the film, it's ready for distribution.

Do you self-distribute?

Lerner: Yes, for some of my films. Then I have some shorter films that have more of a place in the classroom, the educational market. Filmmakers Library has those shorts, and they do pretty well.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 63

System Overload

NAB 2000 offers the brave and hardy a high-intensity preview of the latest broadcast technology.

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

Friday, April 8—Las Vegas: Before the official beginning of NAB 2000, the annual confab of the National Association of Broadcasters, I have a private dinner in a hotel that resembles the Great Pyramid of Egypt covered in black glass with laser lights shooting up from the apex. The entrance to this sprawling building is a full scale fiber-glass replica of the Sphinx. Inside are hundreds of slot machines and gaming tables. Afterwards, I play roulette and manage to leave with an extra $100. I hope this augurs well; perhaps the avalanche of new products at NAB will be less overwhelming than usual.

Saturday: It takes all morning to sort out my schedule for the week, which I usually break down by quarter hours. Today is my only chance for some R&R. I take a quick trip to the Hoover Dam before the onslaught begins. After all the late afternoon press conferences, I play roulette and quickly lose everything I won yesterday.

Sunday: Over mimosas and a Danish breakfast at the Hard Rock Casino, SoftImage introduces a new high-end character animation program called Xsi, which allows animators to copy sequences of movement from character to character as simply as dropping filters on multiple clips in a timeline. From there, I drive to the Sony press conference at Bally's. This is always the biggest event of the day for two reasons—lots of new products and lunch.

Sony introduces the HDW-F900 24p HDCAM camcorder, which George Lucas will use to shoot the next episode of *Star Wars*. Sony is calling their new camera system Cinealta **[http://bpgprod.sel.sony.com/home.bpg].** It records in the 1920 x 1080 format at 24, 25, 29.94, and 30 frames per second. Test footage shot by various Hollywood directors of photography is projected on a wide screen. The tests include a woman walking down a pitch black hall carrying only a candle for illumination. Her face is lit and the hall is visible in deep shadow—extremely cool. An outdoor scene with actors lit in the foreground and a very bright background looked equally gorgeous.



Previewing hi-tech tools for the 21st century at NAB 2000. Inset: our author at the Panasonic press conference.

Then Wim Wenders is introduced. He used the camera to shoot U2 singing "The Ground Beneath Her Feet" for his new film, *The Million Dollar Hotel*. Band sequences, shot with Sony's Cinealta, were intercut with 35mm film footage.

"The digital images intercut well with the footage shot on 35mm," Wenders says. "There was no difference between the film and video when projected. I think film has an edge if a print is struck directly from the negative, but if you go to an IP (interpositive), digital video has the edge. The control factor is exceptional. Most directors stare at a crummy monitor on set. With an HD monitor, you have total control. It's like having the rushes right there. You can see the detail in skin and hair. It's very exciting. I think the 24p camera opens up new possibilities to enlarge and enhance storytelling. This is a milestone in the digital revolution."

Of interest to independents, Sony announces the PD-150A ($3,900), a 3 CCD camcorder that records on miniDV or DVCAM. It's a handycam design with phantom powered XLR adapters, a black-and-white viewfinder, and swing-out color LCD screen.

Sony's champagne lunch follows. It's wonderful as always, despite the fact we have to eat standing. A live HD feed of the Masters Tournament plays on monitors throughout the room. After lunch, it's off to Panasonic's conference in Caesar's Palace.

Panasonic presents new DVCProHD VTRs and cameras capable of recording in 720p and 1080i and a new 60" plasma monitor that displays native 24 frame progressive [www.panasonic.com/PBDS/

index.html]. The Q&A session reveals the display actually shows 24fps material at 72fps (each frame is shown three times, just as film in theaters is projected at 48fps). I walk back to Bally's to drive back to the Hard Rock for Avid's press conference.

Avid's new CEO clearly delivers the message that they plan to listen to their customers and release products for both Mac and NT platforms. His predecessor, having flubbed delivery of that message, lost his job shortly after NAB '99. Avid introduces ePublisher ($600), a streaming media publishing tool for web-enabled video production, a website for editors and post houses [www.avidpronet.com], and upgrades to Xpress (4.0), Xpress DV (1.5), Media Composer (10), and Symphony (3.0). Avid Xpress 4.0 adds a mappable keyboard, JKL trim bin, editing to the timeline, direct output for streaming video formats, and DVD and CD authoring. Media Composer 10 adds traveling mattes and multicam with nine source cameras in real time.

Next stop—back to Caesar's Palace for Discreet's conference. The big announcement is Combustion, a paint, animation, and 3D compositing program that includes the motion tracking, color controls, and keyers from Discreet's high-end software ($3,495 Mac or NT).

Monday: My day is wall-to-wall meetings, private demos, and press events. I'll try to cover a portion of the 327,000 square feet of exhibits at the Sands Convention Center in between appointments.

At NAB, major vendors erect exhibits that sometimes occupy more than the combined space of three upscale suburban homes. Discreet Logic, Apple, Silicon Graphics, NDS, and Microsoft sprawl over vast areas of the floor. Deafening shows, video displays, and demo artists assault your ears. The floor is packed; it's hard to navigate.

Apple and its partners announce hardware to support real-time editing with Final Cut Pro and a new version of Final Cut [www.apple.com/finalcutpro/]. Matrox's RTMax board ($999) will ship in October. It supports real-time effects from DV and S-video sources. Pinnacle's Targa Cine board will ship in August bundled with Final Cut Pro, Commotion Pro 3.0, and Hollywood FX Bronze. Depending on which breakout box you select, this board can provide analog, SD, or uncompressed HD (1080/24p) at unheard-of prices ($6,995-$16,990). The HD versions will be only available as turnkey systems from Apple or Pinnacle System resellers. Final Cut Pro v1.25 adds 16x9 and anamorphic support. It also has what Apple calls smart render. Final Cut will now only render files that actually require rendering.

In the afternoon, I take the shuttle bus to the Las Vegas Convention Center and wander around. Over at Play's booth, Mark Randall and Steve Hartford, two of the company's principals, demo the latest features of Trinity for us. It's a real time uncompressed video (D1 quality) system designed for live switching or nonlinear applications with impressive layering capabilities. Play's corporate philosophy is to put technology in the hands of artists and have fun doing it.

Tuesday: It's a repeat of Monday except the booths are bigger at the Las Vegas Convention Center. There are 799 exhibits scattered over nearly 600,000 square feet space in this exhibit hall. The convention center is dominated by the traditional film and television suppliers such as Sony, Panasonic, Canon, Matthews, and Ikegami. Outside are the truck, antenna, and tower vendors. Luckily, most of those exhibitors are not of interest to me.

Wednesday: I have fewer appointments today so I can finally walk the floor. This is how you discover new things. VST is showing an interesting looking battery-operated Firewire Raid Array. The four-slot drive tower with built-in firewire hub is priced at $1,000. Yet each 25 gigabyte hard drive costs $1,000. It seems too expensive. That's also true for MicroNet's Sancube, a slick looking firewire storage area network with a capacity of 220 gigabytes for $3,700.

The low-cost storage solution winner remains Medea. The company displays its new 450 gigabyte scsi drive array for $5,000 and a 450 gigabyte fiber channel drive array for $9,000. A single fiber channel array is storing footage for all of the uncompressed editing workstations in Accom's huge booth a thousand feet away. A single cable connects everything.

In the farthest corner of the basement exhibit space, I locate the most unusual booth at NAB, Internet Television, Inc. [www.itvweb.com], which looks like a Japanese teenager's room. A tee-shirt draped over a plastic chair serves as a backdrop for images cut from Japanese teenybopper magazines. Producers in a webcasting booth nearby just interviewed *Penthouse*'s Pet of the Year and are handing out digital photos of her. CEO Nory Kamiyama turned the Penthouse model's image into the centerpiece of his booth's shrine to popular culture. It looks like Kamiyama and his compatriots have been living here: a pile of clothing is stored in a corner of the booth. The only evidence of technology is a laptop hooked to a small projector aimed at the back drape. Kamiyama, a grad student at Toyko University, speaks minimal English, but I discover that he and his partners are developing an advanced image matching and motion recognition video search tool for the web. In three years, they might have a larger booth than Adobe. Who knows?

Today I find a number of things useful to independents. Canon will be selling PAL XL1s in the U.S. and offering buyers their choice of lenses. Trans-Video had a new lightweight teleprompter designed for the XL1. Birns & Sawyer showed its Cool Zoom remote (uses LANC) for DV camcorders. Losmandy Flex Track ($300) from Porta-Jib is an inflatable hose system of dolly track that rolls up for storage. Leapfrog Productions [www.ccaption.com] demonstrated a software-only closed captioning program for $745, which will pay for itself in a single use.

After three more press events, a *Videography* writers' dinner, and an evening show of Blue Man Group I return to my condo, grab a FedEx box, and ship 50 pounds of press materials and sales literature home.

Thursday: On this final day, I pull out a map, circle the booths I've missed, and plan the best possible route. Total attendance at NAB reaches 113,000 as I rush around, checking out cameras and lenses. Along the way, I spot Tom Hanks and his wife doing their best to stay incognito. They're here like everyone else to discover the stars of the future—technology that could change the way you work and give free rein to your imagination.

Robert Goodman [goodman@histories.com], an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director based in Philadelphia.

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ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX

BY LISSA GIBBS



Lori Zippay, long-time Executive Director of EAI, which is heading into its 30th year.

Electronic Arts Intermix, 542 W. 22nd St., 3rd fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 337-0680; (212) 337-0679; info@eai.org; www.eai.org; contact: John Thomson, Director of Distribution

What is Electronic Arts Intermix?
Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a resource for artists' video and alternative media. We distribute a collection of over 2,750 new and historical works by international artists and maintain an ongoing preservation program, a new Online Catalogue and collection database, a screening room, and related services.

What constitutes "electronic art?"
Within the context of EAI, it's time-based art that engages with electronic media—in forms ranging from video to the web—as a language, a critical strategy, or a tool for creating work.

What does it mean to be a nonprofit in 21st century America?
For EAI, it means a commitment to serving our artists and audiences by providing an educational, art historical, and cultural context for our collection, while at the same time devising strategies for negotiating a dotcom world.

Who is EAI?
Lori Zippay, Executive Director; Galen Joseph-Hunter, Digital Media Coordinator; Seth Price, Technical Coordinator; Our new Director of Distribution, John Thomson, replaces Stephen Vitiello who has just left EAI after 12 years.

Where does the money come from to fund EAI's activities?
Approximately 75% comes from earned revenue—tape sales and rentals. We also receive funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, as well as foundations.

How, when, and why did EAI come into being?
EAI was founded in 1971 by Howard Wise, who had a gallery in New York that focused on kinetic art. In 1969 he organized "TV as a Creative Medium," the first exhibition in the U.S. devoted to video art. Shortly after, he closed the gallery and founded EAI as one of the first nonprofit organizations dedicated to supporting video as a form of artistic and cultural expression.



Cheryl Donegan used cellophane, glass, and paint in her 1994 video *Practisse*.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
It's ultimately about a passion for the work.

What would people be most surprised to learn about EAI and/or its staff?
Because EAI's tapes pop up in venues all over the world (and have for decades), people are often surprised to learn just how small the staff actually is; they assume we're an enormous operation. And people who are just now discovering video as art are surprised to learn that EAI is almost 30 years old.

How many works are in your collection?
2,750 works are in active distribution. We also house another 500 or so works—a wonderfully rich assemblage of historical materials—that are not actively circulated. (Much of this material is available for in-house viewing, however.)

What types of works do you distribute?
The collection spans an eclectic range of genres, styles, and themes, from performance-based and conceptual works to experimental narratives and even CD-ROM projects by artists such as Chris Marker, Muntadas, and Zoe Beloff. The earliest tape in EAI's collection is the newly restored *Button Happening* from 1965, which is the first video recording made by Nam June Paik. The most recent tape is a new work by Cheryl Donegan, which was completed yesterday. The collection includes works by artists from across the U.S. and from Japan, Europe, Australia, and Latin America. Works range from 30-second spots to feature-length, and are distributed on formats from VHS to digital Betacam and everything in between. (Our archive also houses works on obsolete reel-to-reel and old broadcast formats.)

Best known titles and/or directors in collection

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Nam June Paik, Joan Jonas, Bill Viola, Jean-Luc Godard, Dara Birnbaum, Gary Hill, Bruce Nauman, Cheryl Donegan, Martha Rosler, the Vasulkas, and Vito Acconci. (These are just examples of some of the most well-known artists. The list goes on.)

How is the collection organized?
By artist. Our Online Catalogue is searchable by theme or genre, title, and artists' name, and also includes a special archival section. We also distribute a number of special programs, thematic series, and touring exhibitions.

Upcoming EAI work to keep an eye out for:
We've just launched the first in what will be a series of artists' projects created specifically for the web, *Involuntary Reception* by Kristin Lucas. (This web-based piece includes a video element that can be viewed with Real Player.) Also, our 30th anniversary is coming up in 2001, and among the anniversary events is an archival web project that traces EAI's history through early documents and other ephemera, such as the very first catalogues of the collection.

The difference between video art and film art is ...
usually a matter of the artist's intent, but often a matter of context.

Do you distribute works that have been shot on film, but were edited and can only be exhibited on video?
Yes. The boundaries between video and film are very fluid at this point. We also distribute a number of artists' super 8 and 16mm films from the 1960s and '70s, by artists such as Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, and Joan Jonas that we have restored and now make available on video.

How do you decide what to add to your collection?
There is a selection process. In terms of new works, we're looking to represent the diverse discourses of contemporary art and media. We're also actively working to add (and often preserve) major bodies of historical works from the late '60s and early '70s, so that this important alternative art and cultural history won't disappear. In recent years we've added early works that weren't previously in distribution, by artists such as Hannah Wilke and Ana Mendieta, among many others,

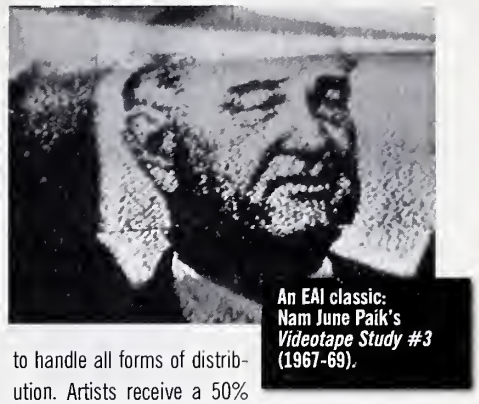
Most unusual place an EAI title has shown:
Two exceptional sites come to mind: the Sony JumboTron screen above Times Square, and inside the Biosphere, when it was still supposedly a self-sustaining environment!

Where do you find your titles, and how should makers approach you for consideration?
We're always looking at work and going to exhibitions and festivals. We also have quarterly reviews of submissions—we ask that artists send a VHS compilation of work, along with contextual materials such as a bio, reviews, etc., and a SASE.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
The range is dramatic and typical of the different approaches that characterize artists' video. We have super-low-budget tapes made by artists who perform in front of a camera in real time (e.g. early performance works by artists such as William Wegman or more recent works by artists such as Ursula Hodel), or use in-camera edits, such as George Kuchar. On the other hand, we also have works that were commissioned as international television productions.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
In general, our strategy is to highlight new works in a special section of our web site, to represent the work in catalogue materials, email updates, and "new works" presentations. Our Screening Room plays an important role in our ability to introduce new works to curators, educators, and other programmers.

What's the basic structure of an artist's distribution deal with EAI?
EAI has nonexclusive contracts with artists. While terms may vary with specific artists or works, we tend to handle all forms of distribution. Artists receive a 50% royalty and are paid semi-annually.



An EAI classic: Nam June Paik's *Videotape Study #3* (1967-69).

Where do Electronic Arts Intermix titles show?
EAI tapes are shown in arts, cultural, and educational institutions all over the world. 65% of our audiences are outside of the United States; last year our tapes were distributed in 27 different countries. (The first day our new Online Catalogue was launched we received online orders from an arts center in Taiwan and a public library in rural Tennessee.)

How do people and programmers find out about your collection?
EAI's Online Catalogue [www.eai.org] has proven to be an extraordinary tool for reaching programmers, curators, educators, and the other audiences. The catalogue includes artists' biographies, descriptions of the works, images, direct online ordering, and special projects designed specifically for the site. We're also now doing quarterly e-mail updates on new works in the collection. We are also working on a new print catalogue.



From *Godiva*, a comical and manic portrait by Ursula Hodel (1997).

Biggest challenge in reaching your audience:
Trying to reach as wide an audience as possible while also maintaining a sense of one-on-one contact with the curators, educators, and others that we serve.

Biggest change at EAI in the last five years:
Internally, the biggest change has been our new Online Catalogue and database, which has had an enormous impact, both as an educational resource and as a marketing tool. Externally, the biggest change has been the remarkable explosion of interest in artists' video with-

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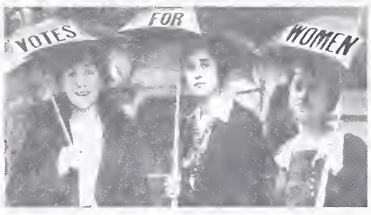
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DISTRIBUTOR FAQ



From Kristin Lucas' *Involuntary Reception*, EAI's first web piece

in the mainstream art world, which has resulted in an explosion of distribution activity at EAI.

How have cuts in public monies available to media artists affected EAI and its work?
Many artists who were once making experimental video works are now making feature films or video installations. On the other hand, there is a new generation of young visual artists and filmmakers who are now working in video and new media. And just this year we've seen a new wave of dynamic short works created by artists (including Tony Cokes, Alix Pearlstein, and Charles Atlas) using digital editing systems in their own studios.

Most important issue facing EAI today is . . .
The need to maintain the integrity of the historical works in the collection through continued preservation efforts, while at the same time supporting the work of new and young artists. A related issue is the need to meet the challenges of new digital technologies, and the impact these technologies will have on distribution and preservation. It's about integrating the history and the present with the future.

The difference between EAI and other distributors is . . .
that we are very engaged in preserving and cataloging the works in the collection. We also tend to function more as a resource than strictly as a distributor, with services such as our screening room. Finally, when we take on an artist for distribution, we commit to that artist's complete body of work; that is, we represent an artist, not a title.

Other distributors you admire and why.
Our colleagues in the field of alternative media distribution, such as Women Make Movies, Video Data Bank, and Third World Newsreel, because they continue successfully to distribute challenging work in a world that demands entertainment, now.

Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o The Independent, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013; or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

THE ADOLPH AND ESTHER GOTTLIEB FOUNDATION

BY MICHELLE COE

The Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, 380 West Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 226-0581 (no website). Contact: Sheila Ross, Grants Manager

What is the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation?
The Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation was established according to the will of Adolph Gottlieb. Gottlieb was one among several artists known as the Abstract Expressionists. One of the foundation's functions is to give grants to mature painters, printmakers, and sculptors. The foundation also continues to exhibit and sell the work of the estate of Adolph Gottlieb.

How, when, and why did the Gottlieb Foundation come into being?
It was set up after Gottlieb's death in 1974. During his lifetime, Gottlieb was very generous to other artists and often provided loans to artists during times of crisis and need. He became acutely aware of artists' needs, especially during times of emergency. To continue Gottlieb's legacy of giving to fellow artists, two programs were set up to assist artists with financial need, the Individual Support and Emergency Assistance programs.

You fund mostly painters, printmakers, and sculptors. Do film and video artists qualify for your programs?
Since Adolph Gottlieb was primarily a painter, sculptor, and printmaker, the programs were set up to assist artists who work in these media. However, the definitions of painting and sculpture have been expanding and changing. Since these categories are shifting, artists who incorporate other media, including video and film into their work, may be eligible for the grant programs. Mature film and video artists whose work can be directly interpreted as painting or sculpture may be eligible to apply for the programs.

Can you elaborate on the type of work that would fall within your guidelines?
While we don't provide funds to artists who work strictly in video or film only, artists who incorporate other media might be considered. For example, an artist who works in an experimental area of film or video and incorporates it within a sculpture or installation may be eligible. Or an artist who works in a combination of performance art, film or video, and installation may also qualify. It would also be important that the work can be represented well in slides or photographs, since these are the only forms of documentation that are reviewed.

The Gottlieb Foundation specifically funds artists, not projects. What are the two grants for which artists can apply and what are their limitations?
The two grant programs have different criteria and application processes. There are no geographic restrictions, as the programs are available to international artists.

The Individual Support grant is an annual program with a deadline of December 15. The foundation gives 10 grants of $20,000 to artists who fit the media criteria that have been previously mentioned and have been working in a mature phase of their art for at least 20 years. We require a written request for an application. Requirements include up to 40 slides documenting 20 years, a completed application form, a three-page narrative statement, and a copy of the previous year's tax return, since there is a financial need eligibility component.

The Emergency Assistance grant gives financial assistance of up to $10,000 to artists who have been in a mature phase of their art for at least 10 years and have suffered a recent and catastrophic emergency, including a fire, flood, or medical emergency. Applications are accepted on an on-going basis, with $4,500 as the average amount awarded per artist.

> ***"Because the program was conceived to provide funds to mature painters, sculptors, and printmakers, the majority of funds do go to artists working in those areas. However, artists who incorporate video or film in their work have been recipients of both grants."***

Do the grants have designated use (i.e. production of projects, general living expenses, etc.)
Grants are awarded for general support and living expenses, rather than for projects or capital expenses. In the case of the Emergency Assistance program, the funds may be earmarked for a specific purpose—for example, the payment of medical bills, or rent and monthly living expenses.

Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used? Can the same individual apply for funds two years in a row?
Funds are generally meant to be used within a year. Unsuccessful applicants for the Individual Support program can reapply yearly. Recipients of this program must wait one year before reapplying. Emergency Assistance applications are reviewed and awarded on a one-time basis only. Artists are eligible to reapply for this program if they are facing a new and separate emergency situation, which is not related to a previously filed or awarded Emergency Assistance application.

Who makes award decisions? Can you name past panelists?
Review panels for the programs are made up of artists and other art professionals. The names of panelists are never announced and are kept strictly confidential.

Who are the Program Officers?
Sanford Hirsch is the Executive Director, Nancy Litwin is the Art Collection Manager, and I [Sheila Ross] am the Grants Manager.

What's the ratio of applicants to recipients? How many of those are media artists?
The foundation does not have a policy of allocating funds based on media. There isn't a policy of allotting a percentage of funds to "x" number of painters, or to "y" number of sculptor/video/installation artists. Applications which meet the guidelines are reviewed by a panel of advisors, made up of artists and other art professionals. Applications are evaluated on their own merit. Obviously, because the program was conceived to provide funds to mature painters, sculptors, and printmakers, the majority of funds do go to artists working in those areas. However, artists who incorporate video or film in their work have been recipients of both grants.

The foundation does keep track of other statistics. In the most recent grant cycle, 445 applications were received for the Individual Support grant program. 10 grants were awarded. Each year, we receive well over 100 Emergency Assistance applications. Approximately 75 percent of the Emergency Assistance applications eligible for review are awarded grants.

Name some of your better known artists you have funded.
The foundation keeps the names of recipients of the Emergency Assistance program confidential. While we do announce the names of Individual Support Recipients, some choose to remain anonymous. In March 2000, a panel of five independent jurors reviewed applications. Each of the following visual artists was chosen to receive an award of $20,000:

Martin Ball, Judith Bernstein, Joel Fisher, Rachel Giladi, Robert Goldman, Bob Griffin, Laurie Lea, Eric Saxon, Judith Simonian, Roy F. Staab.

What are the common mistakes applicants make?
There are several common mistakes. Number one is submitting an incomplete application, which could be a product of applicants not carefully reading the application materials. Examples include omitting required materials, such as a copy of a tax return, not providing adequate slide documentation of work, leaving blanks anywhere on the application forms. We most commonly see this in the financial disclosure section of the application form. Another common mistake is submitting poor quality slides or other poor quality visual documentation of work.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
Have another person review your application before it is submitted to the foundation.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.
The Pollock-Krasner Foundation.

Funder FAQ profiles a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.





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BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (AUG. 1 FOR OCT. ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: SCOTT@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

AFRICAN DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL/CADFF, Nov. 24-Dec. 10, NY. Deadline: Aug. 31. Noncompetitive fest presents films that depict human experience of people of color all over the world. Over 40 features, shorts, docs screened from Africa, the Caribbean, North & South America, and Europe. Filmmakers in residence participate in panel discussions. Cats: features, shorts & docs. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: CADFF, 535 Cathedral Park Way, Ste. 14B, New York, NY 10025; (212) 864-1760; fax: 316-6020; ArtMattan@africanfilm.com; www.africanfilm.com/festival

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 12-19, TX. Deadlines: Aug. 1 (early); Sept. 1 (final). Fest is dedicated to the writer as the heart of the creative process of filmmaking & uncovers outstanding, emerging writers, fostering their development through panels, workshops & master classes conducted by professionals. Cats: feature, short, student short. Awards: $750 (feature), $500 (short & student short), airfare & accomodations to attend AFF & AFF Bronze Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, digital video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $40 (early); $50 (final). Contact: AFF, 1604 Nueces, Austin, TX 78701; (800) 310-3378; fax: (512) 478-6205; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.com

BLUE SKY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-24, NV. Deadline: July 21. Fest accepts film & video in all genres in following cats: feature, short, doc, animation. Film must have been completed after 5/1/99. Awards: Best Director's award totals $12,000 in postproduction services; non-cash prizes also awarded. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30 (feature & doc); $25 (short & animation). Contact: BSIFF, 4185 Paradise Rd., Ste. 2009, Las Vegas, NV 89109; (702) 737-3313; bsiff98@aol.com; www.bsiff.com

BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 7-10, NY. Deadline: July 14. 2nd annual fest is a celebration of variety, diversity & the art of film. Screenings, panels, seminars, screenplay readings, workshops & parties will be a part of 4-day fest. Cats: feature, short, work-in-progress, screenplay. Genres: narrative, doc, experimental, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS, Beta, DVD. Entry fees: $20 (student); $25 (short, 59 min. or less); $40 (feature, 60 min. or longer); $50 (screenplay). Contact: BFF, Michael Carosone, 216 E. 112th St., Ste. #1, New York, NY 10029; bklynfilminst@hotmail.com; www.brooklynfilm.org

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 5-19, IL. Deadline: July 31. 36th annual fest is the oldest competitive event in N. America. It spotlights the latest work in int'l & independent cinema by featuring both established int'l directors & new directors. Cats: feature, short (under 30 min.), short (30-60 min.), experimental, short animation, short doc, student narrative, student doc, student experimental, student animation. Awards: Gold Hugo, for best feature film in int'l competition; separate prizes for docs, student films & shorts. Chicago is the only U.S. site to award the FIPRESCI prize for 1st & 2nd time directors, judged by a jury of top int'l film critics. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 70mm. Preview on 3/4" U-matic, VHS (NTSC, PAL, or SECAM), 16mm, 35mm. Entry fees: $100 (feature); $80 (doc feature); $50 (short under 30 min.); $60 (short 30-60 min.); $30 (student). Late fees range from $20 to $200. Contact: CIFF, 32 W. Randolph St., Ste. 600, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 425-9400; fax: 425-0944; info@chicagofilmfestival.com; www.chicagofilmfestival.com

CMJ FILMFEST, Oct. 19-22, NY. Deadline: Sept. 1. Fest is presented as part of the CMJ Music Marathon/MusicFest, which for 20 years has been acclaimed as one of the most innovative music & media expos in the world. Fest recognizes synergy between music and film & seeks best in independent features, shorts & docs with creative &/or effective use of music. Awards: Best Feature, Best Short, Best Use of Music in Film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $30 (feature & doc); $20 (short). Contact: CMJFF, 810 7th Ave., 21st fl., NY, NY 10019; (877) 6-FESTIVAL; filmfest@cmj.com; www.cmj.com/Marathon

DANCE ON CAMERA FESTIVAL, Jan. 12-13 & 19-20, NY. Deadline: Aug. 15. Fest is the oldest annual int'l dance film/video event in the world. Designed to encourage creativity & collaboration between dancers & filmmakers, fest incl. workshops, lectures & panels. Cats: narrative, experimental, doc. Awards: cash prize for "Best of Festival." Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: DCF, Dance Films Assoc., 48 W. 21st St. #907, New York, NY 10010; tel/fax: (212) 727-0764; dfa5@juno.com; www.dancefilmsassn.org

EARTH VISION: SANTA CRUZ ENVIRONMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 11-14, CA. Deadline: Sept. 1. Earth Vision is a festival & competition featuring productions about the earth & honoring the people who make them. Cats: Forests; Alternative Energy & Vehicles; Pollution & Global Warming; Farming, Pesticides & Soils; Water Quality, Watersheds & Oceans; Endangered Species & Habitats; Environmental Sustainability; and the Environment & Social Justice. Awards: winners receive handblown recycled glass awards. Formats: VHS, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35. Contact: EFVF, 816 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (831) 425-8848; fax: 425-3958; www.communitytv.org

FORT LAUDERDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 16-Nov. 12, FL. Deadline: Aug. 1 (early); Sept. 1 (final); Sept 30 (student). 15th annual competitive fest showcases over 100 independent & foreign features, docs & shorts and is dedicated to highlighting the work of emerging filmmakers & films that have not secured U.S. distribution. Awards: Best Short, Best Doc, Best Director, Best Actor/Actress, Gold Palm, Special Jury Prize & Audience Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $40 (feature, doc); $30 (short); $25 (student). Contact: FLIFF, 1314 E. Las Olas Blvd. #007, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301; (954) 760-9898; fax: 760-9099; brofilm@aol.com; www.fliff.com

KISSIMMEE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 19-22, FL. Deadline: Aug. 11 (early); Sept. 1 (late). Fest is 4-day event w/ screenings, competition, awards, Q & A, guest speakers, celebrities & workshops. Filmmakers, distributors, press & huge audiences meet in a "atmosphere where dreams happen." Awards incl. Best Feature, Best Short & Best Doc. Formats: super 8, 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, Hi-8, Beta SP, 3/4", VHS, S-VHS, DVD, digital video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (early); $45 (late). Contact KIFF, Rick Styczynski, Ultimate Underground Cinema, 776 Country Woods Circle, Kissimmee, FL 34744; (407) 870-6886; filmslam@webtv.net; www.ultimateundergroundcinema.homepage.com

KUDZU FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 16-22, GA. Deadlines: Aug. 1 (early); Aug. 15 (final). 3rd annual fest accepting film & video entries in cats: feature, doc, short & animation. Awards given in each cat, plus New Turner South Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (student); $30 (under 35 min.); $40 (over 35 min.); add $10 for final deadline. Contact: KFF, Box 1861, Athens, GA 30603; (706) 227-6090; fax: 227-1083; kudzu@prometheus-x.com; www.prometheus-x.com

WORTH BY NORTHWEST

Whittling down the more than 300 entries every year for the Northwest Film and Video Festival is a single juror who's chosen to curate the entire festival. Last year's juror was *The Simpsons* creator Matt Groening, and the year before it was Christine Vachon, producer of *Kids*. This unique aspect of the Potland festival insures a radically diverse program from year to year. The festival is limited to denizens of western states: OR, WA, MT, ID, AK, British Columbia, Canada & students therein. After the initial festival has run its course, a collection of films are compiled for the Best of the Northwest tour, which makes its way up and down the coast.



LONG BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-15, CA. Deadline: Aug. 1. Fest will encourage, highlight & nurture films that present a positive contribution to our industry & society. Held aboard the Queen Mary, fest brings together films & filmmakers from the U.S. & abroad. Events incl. digital symposiums, panels, Children's Day Program, Long Beach Film History Series & an awards gala dinner. Cats: film & screenplay competitions. Awards: (features) Grand Prize, Directing Award, Audience Award, Cinematography Award, Screenwriter Award (jury ballot); (shorts) Grand Prize; (screenplay) First, Second, Third Place prizes. Scripts also introduced to studios. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $50. Contact: LBIFF, Tim Swanson/Darrin Plant, 2005 Palo Verde, Ste. 309, Long Beach, CA 90815; (562) 938-9687; fax: 938-9687; lbiff@yahoo.com; www.longbeachfilmfestival.com

MOONDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., CO. Deadlines: Aug. 1; Oct. 1 (final). Fest is designed to encourage and promote women artists. Held in Boulder, the competition is open to all women writers & indie filmmakers. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation, screenplays, short stories, stage plays. Awards: Columbine Award for film, screenplay, stage play, or short story that best depicts problems or conflicts solved in non-violent manner; plus $1,000 for 'best of' in each cat. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, VHS, digital video. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fees: $60; $75 (finall). Contact: MFF, Box 3348, Boulder, CO 80307; (303) 545-0202; moondanceff@aol.com; www.moondancefilmfestival.com

NEW YORK COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., NY. Deadline: Sept.1. Fest salutes the people who make us laugh. Seeking submissions of funny short, feature & animated films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (shorts under 30 min.); $25 (features). Contact: NYCFF, c/o Burly Bear Network, 254 W. 54th St., 11th fl., New York, NY 10019; (212) 293-0770 x. 246; fax: 293-0771; nycff@nycff.com; www.nycff.com

NEW YORK FESTIVALS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO (NON-BROADCAST) AWARDS, Jan., NY. Deadlines: Aug. 1; Sept. 13 (overseas). Founded in '57, int'l competition for wide range of media, from "low budget productions to multimedia extravaganzas." Receives 1,300 entries from 36 countries; awards presented at ceremony attended by 900. Multi-image/business theater productions must be submitted with presentation book. Cats: Industrials, Crafts, Multimedia, Slides, Educational. Awards: Grand Award "Best of Fest" Trophy; Gold, Silver & Bronze World Medals, Finalist Certificates of Recognition. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $110-$275. Contact: NYFIFVA, 186 5th Ave., 7th fl., New York, NY 10010; (914) 238-4481; 238-5040; info@nyfests.com; www.nyfests.com

NORTHWEST FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 2-10, OR. Deadline: Aug. 1. Fest is juried survey of new moving image arts by independent Northwest film- & videomakers. Fest screens approx. 30-35 shorts, features & docs. After initial fest 10-15 shorts are chosen for Best of the Northwest touring program. Event provides a forum for outstanding indie work to receive public recognition, critical appraisal, and an engaged & enthusiastic regional audience. Awards: $15,000+ in production services. Entries accepted in all genres from permanent residents of OR, WA, MY, ID, AK & British Columbia, Canada. Work must have been completed after 8/1/98. Formats: 1/2", 3/4" (NTSC), super 8, 16mm, 35mm. No entry fee ($15 for return shipping costs per entry, $20 Canada). Entry form req. Contact: NWFVF, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; www.nwfilm.org

OJAI FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 15-19, CA. Deadline: Aug. 1. Theme for this year's fest is: "Enriching the Human Sprit Through Film," but films & videos of any length on all subjects are welcomed. Awards will be given in the following cats: Grand Jury Prize, Best Dramatic Feature, Best Dramatic Short, Best Doc Feature, Best Doc Short, Best Animated Film, Best Student Film, Best Experimental Film, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Screenwriting & Film Best Exemplifying Festival Theme. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Betacam, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (35mm); $25 (all other formats); $20 (student, any format). Contact: OFF, 10942 Encino Dr., Oak View, CA 93022; (805) 649-4000; filmfestival@ojai.net; www.filmfestival.ojai.net

OLYMPIA FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-29, WA. Deadline: Aug. 18th. 17th annual fest now accepting entries. For 20 yrs. the Olympia Film Society has been presenting the finest in int'l, indie, classic & fringe features, docs & shorts. CINE-X competition is two programs of experimental shorts. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: In the past, winners have received postproduction support from Alpha Cine Labs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10 (+ postage for return). Contact: OFF, Joe Denardo (for CINE-X) or Sean Savage (all others), 416 Washington St. SE Ste. 208, Olympia, WA 98501; (360) 754-6670; fax: 943-9100; ofs@olywa.net; www.olywa.net/ofs

OUT ON FILM, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, GA. Deadline: Aug. 5. Atlanta's noncompeititive gay & lesbian film festival accepting works of all lengths & genres that were completed after 1/30/99 & feature gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender themes. Awards: Audience Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS, Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: OOF, IMAGE Film & Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW., Ste. N-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 352-4225; fax: 352-0173; afvf@imagefv.org; www.outonfilm.com or www.imagefv.org

PORT OF HUENEME INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 5-8, CA. Deadline: July 15. Fest is held at Beachfront Studio, an independent film studio & location center, and was founded to encourage indie filmmaking in the U.S. without sacrificing quality. Cats: feature, short, doc, screenplay. Awards incl. Best Digital Feature, Best Cinematography, Audience Choice, Best Screenplay, etc. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, digital video. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry fee: $60 (U.S.); $75 (int'l); $100 (screenplays). Contact: PHIFF, 45 West Easy St., Simi Valley, CA 93065; (805) 579-2500; fax: 583-1932; info@phiff.com; www.phiff.com

REHOBOTH BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 8-12, DE. Deadline: Aug. 1. 3rd annual fest celebrates independent & foreign cinema w/ special events, workshops & four days of film in a picturesque coastal resort setting. Approx. 100 entries will be selected (55 features & 40 shorts in '99) for diverse programming in over a dozen theaters. Cats: narrative, doc, children's programming, animated & experimental. Awards: Audience Awards for Best Feature, Best Short, Best Doc & Best Debut Film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on VHS (NTSC preferred). No repeat entries. Entry fees: $20; $15 (students). Contact: RBIFF, 4493 Highway One, Ste. 63, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971; (302) 645-9095; fax: 645-9460; rbfilm@dmv.com; www.rehobothfilm.com

REPRESENT THE REEL: SOUTH BRONX FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 21-23. Deadline: July 31. 4th annual fest is held at The Point, an emergent South Bronx cultural institution. Prizes will be awarded in following categories: narrative, doc, experimental/animation, films for young adults, Young Filmmakers Award (18 & under), Films about The Bronx, and $500 cash prize for Best Film Overall. Formats: 16mm, Beta, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10-35. Contact: RTR, 940 Garrison Ave., Bronx, NY 10474; (718) 542-4139; fax: 542-4988; southbronxfilmfest@usa.net

SACRAMENTO INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., CA. Deadline: July 17. Fest seeks film & video portrayals, either positive or critical, of lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender communities. Cats: open. Awards: Audience Award. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SIGLFF, Linda Deos, 225 30th St., Ste. 306, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 442-6610; fax: 325-1993; deosnider@aol.com; www.fairyflicks.com

SYRACUSE B-MOVIE FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 26-27, NY. Deadlines: July 14 (early); Aug. 1 (final). Fest "celebrates" the low-budget film that rivals or surpasses big-budget mainstream productions in entertainment value. All genres welcome, but films w/ "defined narrative" preferred. Cats: feature, doc, animation, short. Awards given in several "Best of" cats. Formats: VHS, Hi-8, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: early, $25 (shorts & animation under 55 min.); $35 (over 55 min.); late, $35 (shorts & animation under 55 min.); $45 (over 55 min.). Contact SBMF, c/o Sub Rosa Studios, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13220; (315) 454-5608; fax: 478-1410; webmaster@b-movie.com; www.b-movie.com/hof/fest.html

WOODSTOCK FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-24, NY. Deadline: July 15. Annual nonprofit event fosters an intimate, reciprocal relationship between independent filmmakers, industry representatives & audience members. Cats: feature, doc, short & music video. Awards: Maverick award presented in several cats incl. Best Feature, Doc & Short. Entry fees: $50 (60 min. & over); $40 (30-59 min.); $30 (29 min. & under); $25 (music videos & student films). Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP, digital video, VHS. Preview on VHS. Contact: WFF, 3 Tinker St., Woodstock, NY 12498; (914) 744-8758; fax: 744-3869; info@woodstockfilmfestival.com; www.woodstockfilmfestival.com

Foreign

CINANIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 6-12, Portugal. Deadline: Aug. 1. Since 1977, Espinho, a small seaside resort in N. Portugal, has hosted this fest. Program comprises int'l competition & non-competitive program, which incl. panoramas, workshops, conferences, exhibitions, and retrospective (incl. "Mackinnon & Sauders" & "Peanuts"). Awards incl. Great Prize (trophy, certificate & pte 750,000, approx. $3,350); Prize City of Espinho/Hury's Special Award (pte 500,000, approx. $2,235); Prize Best Original Sound Track (pte 200,000, approx. $895), Prize For Best Long-Feature (pte 500,000); Prize por Series/SIC—Portuguese TV ($4,000 & the right for this Channel to pass 30 min.); & prize for the best film in each cat (pte 200,000); winners in each cat also receive trophy & cert. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Imax (8/70), Betacam SP, 3/4" (PAL, SECAM, NTSC). No entry fee. Preview on VHS. Contact: CIAFF, Secretariado do Festival, Apartado 743, Rua 62, 251-4500-901 Espinho, Portugal; 011 351 22 7344611/22 7341621; fax: 351 22 7446015; cinanima@mail.pt

EXGROUND FILMFEST, Nov. 17-26, Germany. Deadline: Aug. 31. Non-competitive fest seeks American independents, films from the Far East, shorts, music films, trash & more for event outside the mainstream. Competition only for films produced in Germany. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). No entry fee. Contact: Exground, Jahnstr. 17, D-65185, Wiesbaden, Germany; 011 49 611 371 156; fax: 49 611 371 157; exground@screenlink.de; www.exground.com

FLANDERS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-21, Belgium. Deadline: Aug 10. Fest originated in 1973 w/ focus on music in film. Today the int'l jury selects winners from features from around the world (many of them w/out a Belgian distributor). Fest incl. films from all over the world, mainly focusing on fiction films & to lesser extent on docs. Shorts, animation & retrospectives are also incl. Attendance is approx. 80,000. Competition: "The Impact of Music on Film," 15 features compete for three prizes: Grand Prix of the Flemish Community for Best Film (1 million BF, approx. $22,225), Best director (1,462,000 BF, approx. $32,490), George Delerue Award for best (application of) music (700,000 BF, approx.

$15,555). Out of Competition section incl.: Country Focus, Film Spectrum (int'l films receiving Belgian premieres), Memory of Film (retrospective section) & a tribute to an important filmmaker. Sep/mag prints are, for technical reasons, not accepted. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, Beta SP (PAL). Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC) w/ documentation of film (pressbook, B/W stills, reviews & director's bio). No entry fee. Contact: FIFF, Wim De Witte, Kortrijksesteenweg 1104, 9051, Ghent, Belguim; 011 32 9 221 89 4; fax: 32 9 221 90 74; wim.dewitte@filmfestival.be; www.filmfestival.be

HELSINKI FILM FESTIVAL: LOVE AND ANARCHY, Sept. 21-Oct. 1, Finland. Deadline: July 31. Fest transforms the Finnish capital Helsinki into a moviegoer's paradise, aiming to promote artistry of filmmaking; inventive, visually stunning, controversial films & highlighting the talents of tomorrow. Fest is a combination of different strands: Best of Young European Cinema, American Independents, Gay & Lesbian, Fantasy films, Experimental Vision, and Modern Doc & Animation. Now also starting Modern Asian Cinema as a new section. Under the flag of "Love and Anarchy" we also harbor the strange & the offensive, as our responsibility is to promote groundbreaking films & the diversity of modern filmmaking to Finnish audiences, industry & professionals. Cats: general. Awards: none. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & video. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: HFF: Love & Anarchy, Box 889, Helsinki 00100, Finland; 011 358 9 684 35 230, fax: 358 9 684 35 232; office@hiff.fi; www.hiff.fi/

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILMFESTIVAL AMSTERDAM & FORUM 2000, Nov. 22-30, Netherlands. Deadline: Aug. 25; Sept. 1 (Forum). Now one of most important fests on int'l doc circuit, a location for meeting colleagues, ind. producers, film buyers & possible financiers. 1999 fest featured about 211 docs in programs: Film Competition Program (shows approx. 25 films in comp for Joris Ivens Award of 25,000 guilders, approx. $10,170); Video Competition (15 films in comp for Silver Wolf (10,000 guilders, approx. $4,070, put up by NPS) Reflecting Images info program designed to stimulate discussion on new doc trends); Top 10 (selection of 10 favorite docs of well-known filmmaker); Highlights of the Lowlands (Best Dutch docs); First Appearance (Young Filmmakers schowing their first or second film); Kids & Docs (docs for children); retros; thematic programs; video program; workshops; seminars & debates. Films in comp may be any length, in 35mm or 16mm (entries shot on video must be transferred to film), completed after Sept. 1 of preceding yr. & not screened or broadcast in Netherlands prior to fest. Video Program accepts docs of any length that are shot on film or video, but finished on video & completed after Sept. 1 of preceding yr. Forum on int'l co-financing of docs also held. Forum is Europe's largest gathering of TV commissioning editors & ind. doc producers. Public pitch session allows selected producers to pitch projects to assembled broadcaster & other professionals. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: IDFA, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017 RR Amsterdam, Netherlands; 011 31 20 6273329; fax: 31 20 6385388; info@idfa.nl; www.idfa.nl

INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG, Nov. 9-18. Deadline: Aug. 25; July 31 (Mannheim Meetings). Founded in '52, this is 2nd oldest German fest. Well-known forum for indies & springboard for newcomers. Eligible are features, docs & shorts of any genre or length. Approx. 20 films in Int'l Competition compete for cash prizes in the cats: Best Feature Film, Best Doc, Best Short Film; plus the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Prize, the Special Award of the Jury, the Film Critics' Prize, the Ecumenical Film Prize & the Audience Prize. Entries must have been completed in the previous year., not screened publicly in German cinemas or broadcast on German TV. Other sections are the Int'l Discoveries (outstanding prods. of previous year), Special Screenings & Retros. Films in Official Program will be presented to around 50 distributors & TV buyers in well-established New Film Market. The Mannheim Meetings, the Int'l Co-Production Market offers the opportunity to find co-production partners for projects in W. Europe (more than 100 participants in '99). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: IFMH, Dr. Michael Koetz, Collini-Center, Galerie, D-68161 Mannheim, Germany; 011 49 10 29 43; fax: 49 621 29 15 64; ifmh@mannheim-filmfestival.com; www.mannheim-filmfestival.com

LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 1-16, UK. Deadline: Aug. 1. Fest, run continuously since 1957, is largest non-competitive & invitational film fest in Europe. For several years, it has programmed one of Europe's largest forums of U.S. indie prods. Overall, 180 int'l features & 100 short films showcased. Sections incl.: Shorts & Animation, British Cinema, Panorama France, Evening Standard "Film on the Square" & Experimental Film. Screenings held at Nat'l Film Theatre & other venues. Nearly 1,000 filmmakers, buyers & media attend. Extensive media coverage & audiences over 100,000. Entries must be UK premieres, produced w/in preceding 2 yrs. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Send info (incl. synopsis & press kit). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", super 8, 8mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: LIFF, Sarah Lutton, Nat'l Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, UK; 011 44 1207 815 1322; fax: 44 1207 633 0786; sarah.lutton@bfi.org.uk; www.llgff.org.uk

SÃO PAOLO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-Nov. 9, Brazil. Deadline: Aug. 12. Recognized by FIAPF, 24th annual competitive fest, presents 2 major sections: Int'l Perspective & New Filmmakers' Competition (up to 3rd film of director). Audience makes pre-selection for jury, selecting 10 films for final judging. Fest also awards Critics' Prize & Audience Prize. Features, shorts & docs of all cats & themes accepted. Entries must have been produced in preceding 2 years & be Brazilian premieres. Winners receive Bandeira Paulista, trophy made by plastics artist Tomie Ohtake. Fest offers audiences opportunity to view works that might not otherwise be seen in Brazil. About 150 films showcased each yr. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SPIFF, Leon Cakoff, festival dir., Alameda Lorena, 937-Cj. 303, 01424 001, São Paolo-SP, Brazil, 011 55 11 3064 5819/3083 5132; fax: 55 11 3085 7936; info@mostra.org; www.mostra.org

SIENA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 3-11, Italy. Deadline: July 31. Fest, held in conjunction w/ Short Film Market, offering five competitions: fiction, experimental, doc, animated films & Italian Panorama. All films must be 30 min. or less & have been produced after 7/1/98. No advertising or industrial films accepted for compeitition. Awards: Best Festival Film, Best Fiction Film, Best Animated Film, Best Doc Film, Best Experimental Film, Special Jury Prize, Audience Award, Best Italian Film; all awards incl. 3 million lire prize (approx. $1,390) except: Best Photography in Italian Panorama (film stock). Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SISFF, Festival del Cortometraggio di Siena Via di Citta,75 53100 Siena, Italy; 011 39 06 4745585; fax: 39 06 47885799; short@comune.siena.it; www.comune.siena.it/short/corto/htm

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COMPETITIONS

ACCOLADES TV SCRIPT CONTEST: Screenplay competition designed to provide outlet for emerging talent & undiscovered screenwriters in increasingly impenetrable industry. Finalist judges incl. agents, managers & other industry executives. Entry fee: $35-$50, depending on TV format (1/2 hr, 1 hr, 2 hr). Grand prize: $2,500. Cats: 1/2 hr. pre-existing sitcom, 1/2 hr. pilot for sitcom, 1-hr. pre-existing show, 1-hr. pilot, 2-hr. MOW or mini-series. Prizes: $500. Deadline: July 31. Appl. avail. on website. Call or write: Accolades TV, 2118 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 160B, Santa Monica, CA 90403; tel/fax: (310) 453-2523; info@americanaccolades.com; www.americanaccolades.com/AccoladesTV.htm

BAD KITTY FILMS SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Dedicated to advancement of new, innovative writers through hard work, promotion, networking & lots of good Karma. Scripts must be unsold/unoptioned at time of entry, narrative (not doc) & of following lengths: Full-length (80-125 pg. max.); short subject (15-30 pages). Awards: Grand Prizes (feature cat) $300 cash, Award of Achievement, consideration for option & development by Bad Kitty Films & intro to one of Hollywood's top writing agents; (short subject cat) $100 cash, Award of Achievement & assistance w/ shopping film in specialized markets. All finalists receive Award of Achievement. All entrants eligible to receive copies of script coverage. Entry fee: $45. Deadline: Aug. 31. For all guidelines: Bad Kitty Films Screenplay Competition, 2431 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (408)-642-MEOW; fax: 723-7378; info@badkittyfilms.com; www.badkittyfilms.com

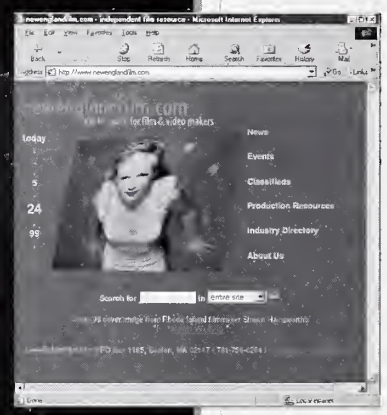
BIG AUSTRALIAN INT'L SCREENWRITING COMPETITION offers $10,000 cash award plus 2-week trip for 2 to Hawaii or Sydney for winner; 10 other finalists get $1,000 each; 20 semi-finalists each receive in-depth script analysis valued at $150. All scripts are logged online & all contestants will receive a copy of judges' scorecards. Entry fees & deadlines: $65 (July 31); $75 (Aug. 31); $85 (Sept. 30). Call or write: Big Australian Int'l Screenwriting Competition, c/o The Source World Wide Scriptservice Pty Ltd., Box 356 Woollahra N.S.W. 2025, Sydney, Australia; fax: 011 61 2 9326-1483 or 61 7 5538-4465; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/the-big-australian

BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION NATIONAL STUDENT SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION designed to promote & recognize outstanding student scripts in cats of feature, short & TV series. All full- & part-time students, undergraduate or graduate, in U.S. institutions of higher education eligible. Awards: $200 check, software from Screenplay Systems Inc., book of choice from Focal Press. Deadline: Jan. 2001. Broadcast Education Association, Department of Communications, CA State University, Fullerton, CA 92834-6846; (714) 278-5399; fax: 278-2209; efink@fullerton.edu; www.marquette.edu/bea/write/STU00-COMP.htm

COLUMBUS SCREENPLAY DISCOVERY AWARDS was established to bridge gap between writers & entertainment industry. One screenplay accepted monthly to receive rewrite notes from script consultant. Awards: Up to $10,000 option, script analysis, film courses, conferences, software. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $55. Contact: Columbus Screenplay Discovery Awards, 433 North Camden Dr., Ste. 600, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (310) 288-1988; fax: 288-0257; awards@HollywoodNetwork.com; www.HollywoodNetwork.com

NEW ENGLAND CHOWDER

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is an all-encompassing online resource for Mass., Conn., Rhode Island, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire & New York filmmakers. It features an expansive industry directory (with sections on preproduction, casting & talent, equipment rentals & sales, crew, studios & stages, production, postproduction, distribution & marketing companies, plus miscellaneous services), as well as articles on funding, distribution, and legal issues. The site, which also delivers its contents via email bulletins, contains interviews w/ filmmakers, reviews, company profiles, film festival profiles, "how to" articles & discussion forums, plus classifieds and events. See listing.



DRAMA GARAGE THURSDAY NIGHT SCRIPT READING SERIES: Monthly script reading at Occidental Studios in L.A. w/ professional director & actors. Writer chosen receives copy of Final Draft software & is interviewed by IntheBiz.net, web site & private networking organization for assistants in ent. industry to agents & producers. Deadline: monthly. Processing fee: $25. See web site for appl., rules & submission info. Contact: Drama Garage, Thursday Night Script Reading Series, 1861 N. Whitley, Ste. 205, L.A., CA 90028; (323) 993-5700; www.dramagarage.com

ERIK BARNOUW AWARD recognizes outstanding reporting or programming on network or cable TV, or in doc film concerned w/ American history, the study of American history &/or promotion of history. Only works released in 2000 are eligible for award to be given in 2001. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Erik Barnouw Award, Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47408-4199; (812) 855-9852; fax: (812) 855-0696; kara@oah.org

EMPIRE SCREENPLAY CONTEST: Feature-length narrative film projects solicited in two cats: Hollywood or Bust (relatively expensive to produce) & High Value (relatively inexpensive to produce). In keeping w/ main objective of competition—to enhance availability of quality material for Hollywood—contest first solicits proposals for movie projects. After evaluation, completed scripts are requested from writers for those projects deemed to be of interest to producers. Prizes: $2,000 to winner in each category. Deadlines (postmark) & entry fees: July 15 ($45); Aug. 15 ($50). Contact: empirecontact@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/empirecontact

***FADE-IN*: SCREENWRITING AWARDS**: Cash prizes & industry exposure from publishers of *Fade-In* magazine. Entries accepted in 5 cats (comedy, action/adventure, thriller, drama, film noir) & two formats (features, shorts). Scripts must not have been optioned at time of entry or at time material is chosen as finalist & must be original work of applicant & not based, in whole or part, on another author's work. Awards: Grand Prize: Apple Performa computer, plus expense-paid trip to meet w/ top literary agents & studio executives for 3 days. Prizes in each category, First: $500, Waterman fountain pen, Final Draft software & one year's *Fade-In* subscription; Second: $250, script analysis by WGA-credited writer, one year's *Fade-In* subscription; Third: $100, script analysis by WGA-credited writer, one year's *Fade-In* subscription. Entry fee: $40. Deadline: Oct. 30. Contact: *Fade-In* Screenwriting Awards, 289 S. Robertson Blvd. Ste. 465, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (800) 646-3896; www.fadeinmag.com

FILM ARTS FOUNDATION & BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION awards James D. Phelan award in film & video in Nov. to one filmmaker and one videomaker ($7,500 each) born in CA (not necessarily living there). Award is jointly administered by FAF and BAVC & sponsored by the San Francisco Foundation. Completed prints/tapes required—no works in progress. Deadline: July 24. www.filmarts.org or (415) 552-8760.

FINAL DRAFT INTERNATIONAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: Sponsored by Final Draft software. Entry fee: $55. Deadline: Sept. 30. Ten prize winners. First 5: $10,000, $5,000, 3,000, $2,000, $1,000 plus submission of script to major Hollywood literary agent. Top 3 also get round-trip airfare to L.A. plus 3 nights hotel accom. Next 5 will have scripts submitted to the agent & receive latest version of Final Draft software. info@finaldraft.com; www.finaldrft.com

HOLLYWOOD SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST: To provide new valuable outlet for recognizing & promoting quality scripts of undiscovered writers worldwide. Independent filmmakers now provide new writers w/ opportunities never before available. Aspiring writers can now get recognized & gain entry into the entertainment industry more readily. Unoptioned fea-

tures (no TV dramas or sitcoms) in English, between 90 & 130 pgs. Winning writer will have script sent to agent who will forward it to appropriate producer; will also receive one year's subscription to *Creative Screenwriting*; synopsis will be published on Internet by GreatScripts.com for filmmakers who are registered w/ GreatScripts.com Entry fee: $50. Deadline: Monthly (postmarked by 15th of each month). Contact: Donna Lee, Director, 1605 Cahuenga Blvd., Ste. 213, Hollywood, CA 90028; (800)-SCRIPT; hwdscreen@aol.com; www.moviewriting.com

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Established to give you experience, feedback & direction as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer, or development company sit up & take notice. You may enter one-page synopsis of screenplay you've already written or intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, plus free Script Detail of screenplay of your choice. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entryform.html

JURY OF YOUR PEERS 2000: Annual competition judged entirely by aspiring screenwriters. Until now there has been no voice for the aspiring writer. Cats: Feature drama, feature comedy, TV sitcom, TV 1-hr drama. Contest open only to writers who have never had a script optioned or purchased or who have never served in any manner in writing for any TV or motion picture either in pilot form or in actual produced piece. Awards: Prestige of peer recognition, cash (7% of entry pot), software, subscriptions. Entry fee: $55. Deadline: July 15. Details: PeerJury2000@aol.com; www.juryofyourpeers2000.hypermart.net

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted. First prize: $1,000. Rules & entry forms at www.filmmonterey.org or send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (831) 646-0910; mryfilm@aol.com

NEW ENGLAND SCREENWRITERS CONFERENCE seeks feature-length, English language, original, unoptioned screenplays for its 3rd annual competition. Finalists invited to NESC, receive industry introduction & $5,000 in cash prizes. Deadline: July 8. Contact: Send SASE to Tom Dooley, Screenwriting Competition Director, Providence Film Foundation, Box 6705, Providence, RI 02940; (401) 751-9300; www.NEScreenwriters.com

ONE IN TEN SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: To promote gay & lesbian material in a positive light. Each script must have one primary character that is gay or lesbian, be in English & be between 90-120 pages. Awards: $300 (1st), agency & studio exposure; $200 (2nd) & studio exposure; $100 (3rd) & script software. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: Sept. 1. Send SASE for rules to: Cherub Prod., Box 540, Boulder, CO 80306. Attn: One in Ten Screenplay Competition; (303) 629-3072; CHERUBFILM@aol.com; www.members.aol.com/cherubfilm/

SANTA FE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION 2001, co-founded by screenwriting teacher & author Rick Reichman & award-winning writer/director Larry N. Stouffer, is accepting submissions through Oct. 31. Top 5 awards: $2,000, $1,000, $500, $250, $125; next 15 finalists get $50 each. Top 5 also get free tuition at annual screenwriting conference held in Santa



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SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Screenplays must not have been previously optioned, purchased, or produced. Top 3 awards: $2,000, $1,000, $500. Also software plus submission to major literary agency & major studio. Entry fee: $60. Deadline: July 12. Contact: Allen Glazier, Slamdance Screenplay Competition Director, 6381 Hollywood Blvd, #520, L.A., CA 90028; (323) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; AGlazier@Slamdance.com; www.slamdance.com

TELLURIDE INDIEFEST SCRIPT COMPETITION: unique festival/seminar dedicated to spirit & advancement of independent film/videomaking & screenwriting. Entry fee: Varies, depending on length of script (120 pg. max.) & date entered. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Telluride IndieFest, c/o Queso Productions, Box 860, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 728-3747; fax: 728-8128; festival@telluridеindiefest.com; www.telluridеindiefest.com

WISCONSIN SCREENWRITER'S FORUM: To assist TV & feature writers through education, support & networking. Feature films must be betw. 90-120 pg. No entries accepted before Sept. 1. Awards: Certificates, special support from the WSF, subscription to journals & newsletters, full tuition to the "Selling to Hollywood" seminar held in Los Angeles. Loglines of top scripts sent to agents, producers & directors. Entry fee: $30 members/$60 non-members (includes 1 year of membership). Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: WSF Screenwriters Contest, Box 11378, Milwaukee, WI 53211; (888) 282-6776; www.execpc.com/~wsf

Conferences & Workshops

SELLING TO HOLLYWOOD—13th annual Screenwriters Conference of American Screenwriters Assoc. Aug. 3-6 at Hilton Glendale, L.A. Contact: ASA Selling to Hollywood Screenwriters Conference, Box 292010, Kettering, OH 45429; (937) 640-2690; fax: (513) 731-9212; info@sellingtohollywood.com; www.sellingtohollywood.com

TUCSON 2000, Alliance for Community Media's 2000 Int'l Conference & Trade Show, July 12-15, Westin La Paloma Resort, Tucson, AZ. Registration fees: $325 ($355 after July 1). Contact: ACM, 666 11th St., NW, Ste. 740, Washington, DC 20001; (202) 393-2650. www.access.tucson.org/ tucson2000

Films & Tapes Wanted

ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in exper., abstract & doc cats. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 1335 Huron River Dr. #19, Ypsilanti, MI 48197; anomalousvideo@hotmail.com

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for 2000 video series, all genres. Submit VHS only, resumé, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo, NY cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min. on 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi-8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@pce.net

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for indep. shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to *Bijou Matinee*, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

THE BIT SCREEN, an online venue for "made for the Internet" video & animation, is currently seeking submissions for fall 2000. We spotlight web filmmakers who are inventing new methods of storytelling for a new medium. We have affiliations w/ Road Runner, Europe OnLine, Media One, Excite at Home, Broadcast.com, Common Places, & Fastv.com. Deadline: July 15. www.TheBitScreen.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital submissions of 30 min. or less on ongoing basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Artists paid honorarium & will qualify for non-exclusive distribution deals. Looking for short, narrative, alternative, anim., underground works. Works selected will, in most cases, continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings. Submit VHS/or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone no. along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Contact: Blackchair Prods., 2318 2nd Ave., PMP #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com. Unable to return submissions.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre/subject matter. Deadline: ongoing. Send tapes & SASE to: The Ind. Film & Video Series, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 5th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018.

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING FILM PROGRAM, hosted by Film Society of Lincoln Center, is currently seeking original films or videos, from 1-20 min., to include w/ monthly screenings of open-captioned featured films at Walter Reade Theater. Films w/ artistic involvement from deaf artists preferred, but not required. Seeking original work that can be understood by deaf audience—dialogue must be subtitled. Send 1/2" video copy to The Film Society of Lincoln Center, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Film Program, 165 W. 65th St., 4th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; sbensman@dti.net

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS preview, Betacam, VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts, feature works-in-progress & web films seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FIREWATER FILMS,the only year-round short film series in NYC, seeks short film submissions (cats: narrative, doc., animation & experimental). Films are shown on both VHS & 16mm formats at the Big Top Theater. Firewater Films, Box 20039, NY, NY 10025; (212) 414-5419; fax: 724-8190; www.firewaterfilms.com

FUNNY SHORTS requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film/video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & pros welcome. Cash & prizes awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returned. Send VHS entries to: Funny Shorts, c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, experimental & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218.

MAKOR continues its ongoing series showcasing the work of emerging Jewish filmmakers. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress for screening consideration & network building. Program sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact Ken Sherman: (212) 601-1021; ken.sherman@makor.org

MUSIC VIDEOS WANTED; Submit original music videos for a super series for the electromagnetic spectrum. Any genre or subject. Amateurs, students & pros welcome. No quality is too bad or too good. Submit VHS tape, email address & SASE for return of materials to: Grrrowl Prods., 24 Walker Dr., Belle Mead, NJ 08502; grrrowlproductions@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/grrrowlproductions/

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for Nat'l Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 775-7860.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. long considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature, plus brief Q & A w/ audience. Works over 15 min. considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

P.O.V., PBS's award-winning showcase of indep, nonfiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of indep. nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31. (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland, OR, Peripheral Produce seeks to promote experimental, abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

POTHOLE PICTURES: revitalized 450-seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series—a showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length/genre. Connection to New England whether thru subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers helpful but not necessary. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com

THE SHORT LIST; showcase for American & int'l short films, airs nat'ly on PBS stations. Pays $100/min. All genres, 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced in association w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards five Kodak product grants annually to selected series filmmakers. Submit on VHS. For appl., send SASE to: Jack Ofield, Director, The Production Center, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; www.theshortlist.com; ShortList@mail.sdsu.edu

SONO ARTS CELEBRATION 2000, annual summer arts festival in Norwalk, CT, looking for short video/film for outdoor screening. Early August. Humor, anim., etc. Send VHS to: Film Coordinator, Sono Arts, Box 600, Norwalk, CT 06856; Lisa (203) 866-7916; www.sonoarts.org

UNQUOTE TV: Weekly nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative work of all genres. Produced at DUTV-Cable 54 & cablecast nat'ly, Unquote Television is now in its 10th year. Send to: Unquote TV c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. 9B/4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short anim., exper., or doc videos for ongoing screening series. No narrative or works made on film. Currently searching for int'l videos for upcoming series in spring. Send non-returnable VHS tape w/ brief bio & $1 to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, NY, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

WGBH-TV, Boston: Ever thought about broadcasting your independent film on television? WGBH is committed to supporting independent filmmakers, incl. those who may never have considered local TV broadcast an option. Looking for top notch indie films & videos to be part of our ongoing local series "Viewpoint," which showcases works from across New England & around the world. Films selected for broadcast receive honorarium from WGBH. Tapes accompanied by SASE will be returned. Broadcast masters must be on DigiBeta, BetaSP, D5, or D3. No programming produced for public access cable accepted. Send VHS screening copies of your doc, narrative film, or anim (no length requirements) to: Chad Davis, Viewpoint, WGBH-TV, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-2647; chad_davis@wgbh.org

ZOOM: During 70s, *ZOOM* was a kids'-only series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, films, games & more. *ZOOM* is back & seeking films, animation & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & may see their film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super 8, 16mm, Beta. Age: 7-16. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/*ZOOM*, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-3883; marcy_gardner@wgbh.org

Publications

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION'S new directory to the independent magazine world can give you names & numbers of editors you need: *Annotations: A Guide To The Independent Press* ($24.95 + $3.05 S&H). Send check to: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 634-4401; www.indypress.org

JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeks written reviews of University Film & Video Association member films for possible inclusion in journal—send approx. 5 double-spaced pages to: Temple University, Dept. of Film & Media Arts, 14E Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8472; lerickson3@aol.com

Resources & Funds

ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM offered by California Arts Council to individual CA artists involved in Performing Arts. Artists must show 10 years of previous professional experience to be eligible. Must be primary creators of their work. Matching funds not required & no specific project must be carried out w/ CAC funds. Program funds different disciplines in a 4-yr rotation cycle: 2000-2001: Media and New Genre; 2001-2002: Literature; 2002-2003: Visual Arts; 2003-2004: Performing Arts. Deadline for 2000/2001: Sept. 15. Notification of award made in early 2001. Applications avail. from June. CA Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (800) 201-6201; (916) 322-6555; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. Total of $18,000 in awards available to NYC Asian American arts organizations (501 (c)(3) status or Charities Bureau registration) w/ annual budget of $100,000 or less. Deadline: late fall. Contact: Chanchal Dadlani, (212) 941-9208 for appl. details & deadlines; info@aaartsalliance.org

BAVC JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, Bay Area Video Coalition Job Resource Center provides S.F. residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books & job/internship listings. Open Mon-Fri. 12-5 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org; www.bavc.org

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents this interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Artists' foundation, committed to supporting individual artists is accepting appls. Deadline: Oct. 31. Download from www.creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative, anim. & exper. projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Oct. 15.

Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

FREE VIDEO RECORDING: Open call to independent artists for Promote Art Works Inc.'s "Spontaneous Combustion" series, which airs monthly on Brooklyn Community Access Television. All fields, dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater will be entertained. No works-in-progress accepted. Quality videotapes also accepted for editing. Call Kathleen at (718) 797-3116

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development, Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distrib. to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423, (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION is pre-eminent entertainment industry assoc. for women in NYC dedicated to helping women reach highest levels of achievement in film, TV & new media. NYWIFT produces 50+ innovative educ. programs & special events each year & org's membership numbers more than 1,100 women & men working in all areas of film, TV & new media industries. NYWIFT is part of int'l network representing more than 1,000 members. Membership & intern/mentor program info., contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10016; staff@nywift.org; www.nywift.org

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable Industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 unique visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites are free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES (NYCH) offers Major Project Grants to support public events on humanities topics for audiences throughout the state. Programs funded by NYCH take many forms: conferences, lecture series, panels, symposia, reading & discussion programs, museum exhibits, film series, radio productions, on-line exhibitions, & walking tours. The common denominator in all Council-sponsored projects is an emphasis upon "the humanities." Major Project Grants range btwn. $2,500 & $15,000. Deadline: Nov. 1. Download appl. & guidelines at www.culturefront.org/culturefront/nych/grants/; hum@echonyc.com

OPEN CALL 2K: ITVS considers proposals for new innovative programs of std broadcast length for public television on ongoing basis. ITVS seeks provocative, spellbinding stories from diverse points of view & diverse communities. No finished works. Projects in any genre (comedy, satire, anim., drama, doc, exper., short) or stage of development considered. Programs should break traditional molds of exploring cultural, political, social, or economic issues, take creative risks, or give voice to those not usually heard. Deadline: Sept. 15. Applications & guidelines: www.itvs.org. Contact: (415) 356-8383, x. 232, Beky_Hayes@itvs.pbs.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to pro 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadline: Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; www.pacificpioneerfund.com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postproduction services at discounted rates. For rate card & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-9991; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org





THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: one year's subscription to The Independent • access to group insurance plans • discounts on goods and services from national Trade Partners • online and over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars, screenings, and events • book discounts • classifieds discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members-only web services.

DUAL MEMBERSHIP

All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household, except for the year's subscription to The Independent which is shared by both.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY/NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP

All the above benefits (except access to insurance plans) • option to request up to 3 one-year subscriptions to The Independent • representative may vote and run for board of directors • discounts on display advertising • special mention in each issue of The Independent.

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Year's subscription to The Independent for multiple readers.

JOIN AIVF TODAY!

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MAILING RATES

Magazines are mailed second-class in the U.S.

- ☐ First-class U.S. mailing - add $30
- ☐ Canada - add $18
- ☐ Mexico - add $20
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* Your additional, tax-deductible contribution will help support the educational programs of the Foundation for Independent Video and Film, a public 501(c)(3) organization.

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Mail to AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl, NY, NY 10013; or charge by phone (212) 807-1400 x 236, by fax (212) 463-8519, or via our website www.aivf.org. Your first issue of The Independent will arrive in 4-6 weeks.

CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. AUG. 1 FOR OCT. ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $65/NONMEMBERS; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $90/NONMEMBERS. INCL. VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED & ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCL. CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD #; NAME ON CARD; EXP. DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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AVID MC1000 MAC QUADRA950 AVR3,25,26 Mitsubishi Diamondscan monitors Sigma Black Burst generator, Roland speakers $15,000 or best offer. Call David at Edgewood (802) 773-0510.

CLEAN AVID 8000 for rent in great Soho/Little Italy area film & media center. Fully loaded Avid, private room, 24/7 access, AVR 75, 36 gigs. Indie projects $750/week. Call (917) 687-7166; fivepts@escape.com

DP W/ CANON XL-1; BETA-SP DECK RENTAL avail. I shoot all formats: film/video. Nonlinear editing w/ all video formats. 13 yrs exp w/ Academy Award nomination. Affordable rates. DMP Productions (212) 967-1667; http://members.tripod.com/~dmpfilm

FOR RENT: SONY 3 CHIP digital DV camera Plus Sennheiser ME 66 shotgun mic, with or without operator. $100 per day without operator. Call (212) 966-5489.

FOR RENT: SONY 3-CHIP DIGITAL CAMERA (DCR-VX1000). Also available: mic, light & tripod. Negotiable rates for both short & long-term rentals. Please call (718) 284-2645.

FOR RENT: Sony 3-chip digital DV Cam camera, plus light set, tripod and sound equipment. Negotiable rates for both short & long-term rentals. Please call (917) 549-5456.

FOR SALE: Fujinon A14 x 9B Green Line zoom lens. Model ERM-28. Perfect condition; very little use. First offer over $2,500. Also, Weaver-Steadman balanced fluid head tripod w/ Gitzo legs. Elderly but perfectly functional. Smooth. Tilts thru 360 degrees. Offer more than $1,000. I'll pay shipping. Money back on either if not satisfied. Fax Kip #102 @ (305) 743-3388.

FOR SALE: New Quartz (aka Kinoflex) Super-8 cameras. $195 + $8 shipping. Volume discounts available. Six month warranty. Credit cards accepted. (917) 251-4062; www.fafilm.com/index.html

SOHO AUDIO RENTALS: Time code DATs, RF diversity mics, playback systems, pkgs. Great rates, great equipment & great service. Discounts for AIVF members. Larry (212) 226-2429; sohoaudio@earthlink.net

VIDEO DECKS/EDIT SYSTEMS/CAMERAS FOR RENT: I Deliver! Beta-SP Deck (Sony UVW-1800) $150/day, $450/wk. DV deck $150/day. S-VHS off-line edit system $450/wk. Sony DVCAM 3-chip camera $150/day. Lights, tripods, mics & mixers. David (212) 362-1056.

Distribution

16 YEARS AS AN INDUSTRY LEADER! Representing outstanding video on healthcare, mental health, disabilities & related issues. Our films win Oscars, Emmys, Duponts, Freddies & more. Join us! Fanlight Productions: (800) 937-4113; www.fanlight.com

A+ DISTRIBUTOR since 1985 invites producers to submit quality programs on VHS w/ SASE for distributor consideration. Mail to Chip Taylor Communications, 15 Spollett Dr., Derry, NH 03038; www.chiptaylor.com

AQUARIUS HEALTH CARE VIDEOS; Seeking emotionally charged documentaries on health issues—mental health, aging, women's health, alternative medicine, disability & teen issues. We understand the issues & work with the experts in the field. Send previews to: 5 Powderhouse Lane, Sherborn, MA 01770; call (508) 651-2963; www.aquariusproductions.com; email: aqvideos@tiac.net

BUYINDIES.COM The founders of NewEnglandFilm.com have created another site: BuyIndies.com, a community to buy & sell independent films. If you have copies of your movie available on VHS or DVD, then you can join as a seller and list any or all of your titles. BuyIndies.com handles the ecommerce, customer service and promotion; you handle the shipping. Filmmakers keep all rights to the film. Already over 45,000 titles have been gathered. You can find out more info at http://www.buyindies.com/sell/ or email info@buyindies.com

CHOICES, distributor of World Almanac Video and Choices Video, is looking for completed quality documentaries and films for distribution. Contact: Choices, Inc., 369 S. Doheny Drive, PMB 1105, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (310) 358-0885.

LOOKING FOR AN EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR? Consider the University of California. We can put 80 years of successful marketing expertise to work for you. Kate Spohr: (510) 643-2788; www-cmil.unex.berkeley.edu/media/

SEEKING EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS on guidance issues such as violence, drug prevention & parenting for exclusive distribution. Our marketing gives unequaled results. Call Sally Germain at The Bureau for At-Risk Youth: (800) 99-YOUTH x. 210.

TAPESTRY INTERNATIONAL LTD: Experienced, Academy Award winning producer & worldwide distributor of quality documentaries, drama shorts, music, children's, and cultural programming is seeking new & original material (over 45 min. for documentaries) for int'l distribution and/or co-production. For consideration, fax film description to Emma Broomhead on (212) 505 5059; or email to: ebroomhead@tapestry-intl.com.

THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Ste. 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com. Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

WE WANT YOUR FILMS: sputnik7.com, an online entertainment network featuring a sophisticated mix of independent music, film, and anime, is seeking innovative films of all genres & lengths. Filmmakers have the potential to have their films released through sputnik7.com partners Palm Pictures for theatrical distribution & RYKO Distribution for DVDs & Home Videos. Contact submissions@sputnik7.com or (212) 613-1640 for more info.

Freelance

35MM/16MM PROD. PKG w/ cinematographer. Complete studio truck w/ DP's own Arri 35BL, 16SR, HMIs, dolly, jib crane, lighting, grip, Nagra . . . more. Ideal 1-source for the low-budget feature! Call Tom today for booking. (201) 741-4367.

AATON CAMERA PKG. Absolutely perfect for indie features. Top of the line XTR Prod w/ S16, timecode video, the works! Exp DP w/ strong lighting & prod skills wants to collaborate in telling your story. Andy (212) 501-7862; circa@interport.net

ACCLAIMED AND UNUSUAL instrumental band can provide music for your next project. Contact "Magonia" for demo: (781) 932-4677; boygirl@mediaone.net; www.magonia.com

ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER/CONTROLLER: Experience in both corporate & nonprofit sectors. Hold MBA in Marketing & Accounting. Freelance work sought. Sam Sagenkahn (212) 481-3576.

ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: *Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light*. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com

ANDY SHILLABEER: DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY. Own Super 16 Aaton XTR package. Worldwide experience in docs and Natural History; Film & Video; Studio & Location (often in extreme environments). Credits for BBC, Discovery, Nat Geo etc. Looking to expand my features/commercials/promo experience. Very competitive rates & terms. Crew available. Web page: http://members.aol.com/acsfilms/home.html; Contact : acsfilms@aol.com

ATTORNEY: Former in-house business affairs counsel, providing legal & consulting services to the film, television and video community. Free initial consultation. Reasonable/ Flexible rates. Contact Ivan A. Saperstein, Esq. (914) 391-3452.

AWARD-WINNING EDITOR available, with own broadcast-quality Media 100. Will negotiate affordable rates for worthwhile projects. Also 7 years Avid experience on docs & shorts. Call (917) 548-5989.

AWARD-WINNING EDITOR, w/ Avid and Beta SP facility. Features, shorts, docs, music videos, educational, industrials, demos. Trilingual: Spanish, English, Catalan. Nuria Olive-Belles (212) 627-9256.

AWARD-WINNING SINGER/SONGWRITER Caroline Horn has original songs for film projects. Pop, rock/alt, folk, rootsy, eclectic. Instrumental mixes also available. Live + studio credits: Roberta Flack, Diane Schuur, Phillip Glass, Loudon Wainright III. "Earthy and soulful . . . a real inspiration"—Rosanne Cash. Contact: (718) 789-0037; carhorns@ aol.com

BETA SP & DVCAM Videographer with both cameras, lights, monitors, mics & wireless. Very portable, lightweight & I'm fast. Experience incl. documentaries, industrials, fundraisers & fashion. Please call John Kelleran (212) 334-3851.

BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography w/ many feature & short film credits. Owns 35 Arri BL3, Super 16/16 Aaton, HMIs, Tungsten, & dolly w/ tracks. Awards at Sundance & Raindance. Call for quotes & reel at (212) 226-8417; web site: www.dp-brendanflynt.com

BROADCAST ENGINEER. 15 yrs. exp. Has Betacam SP location package. 3-chip mini DV. Looking to work on projects. Michael (212) 691-1311.

CAMERAPERSON: Visual storyteller loves to collaborate, explore diverse styles & formats. Brings passion & productivity to your shoot. Award-winner w/ latest Super/ Std. 16 Aaton XTR Prod. package. Todd (718) 222-9277; wacass@concentric.net

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Documentary, commercial, narrative experience. Beta SP, Mini DV, Aaton XTR Packages. Comfortable Avid suite (AVR 77). Call Andre for reel: (212) 367-3730.

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ Arri SR Super 16 package & 35IIC, w/ over 15 years in the industry. Credits incl. 2nd unit, FX & experimental. Looking for interesting projects. Will travel. Theo (212) 774-4157; pager: (213) 707-6195.

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ reg/S-16mm Aaton, video-tap, lighting gear & more. Digital video too. Collaborations in features, shorts, docs, music videos & other compelling visions. Kevin Skvorak, reel & rates (718) 782-9179; kevskvk@inx.net

COMPOSER: Award-winning, experienced, will creatively score your film/TV/video project in any musical style. Extensive credits include nationally released features, TV dramas, documentaries, animation, on Networks, MTV, Disney, PBS. Columbia MA in composition; full digital studio; affordable. Demo reel available. Elliot Sokolov (212) 721-3218; or email Elliotsoko@aol.com

COMPOSER: Creative, productive, and diversified composer will work with you and your budget. Visit my web site for details, music samples, and info on buyout music CDs. Michael Hayes at: (615) 329-2313 x. 2227, www.michaelhayesmusic.com

COMPOSER: Experienced, award-winning Yale conservatory grad writes affordable music in any style that will enhance your project. Save money without compromising creativity. Full service digital recording studio. FREE demo CD/initial consultation/rough sketch. Call Joseph Rubenstein; (212) 242-2691; joe56@earthlink.net

COMPOSER: MFA (NYU/Tisch) and extensive experience with theater, dance & Sundance filmmakers. Will work with any budget in styles ranging from classical to drum & bass to African-Hungarian jazz. Low budget services include digital studio & live cello. Contact Raul Rothblatt (212) 254-0155; deblatt@interport.net

COMPOSER Miriam Cutler loves to collaborate with filmmakers—features, docs. Sundance: *Licensed To Kill, Death, A Love Story* / Peabody: *The Castro* / POV: *Double Life of Ernesto Gomez* & more (323) 664-1807; mircut@pacificnet.net

COMPOSER: Perfect music for your project. Orchestral to techno—you name it! Credits incl. NFL, PBS, Sundance, Absolut. Bach. of Music, Eastman School. Quentin Chiappetta (718) 752-9194; (917) 721-0058; qchiap@ el.net

CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ lighting director background. Specialty films my specialty. Can give your film that unique "look." 16mm & 35mm packages avail. Call Charles for reel: (212) 295-7878.

DIGITAL VIDEO—Sony VX100 digital camera & cameraman, Sennheiser ME 66 shotgun mic, pro accessories. Experienced in dance, theater & performance art documentation. $150 a day plus tapes for documentations. Larger projects negotiable. Final Cut Pro digital editing with editor $25 per hour. John Newell (212) 677-6652; johnewell@earthlink.net

DIGITAL VIDEO Videographer/DP, with Canon XL-1 videocam; prefer documentaries, shorts and less traditional projects; documentation for dance, music and performance. Alan Roth (718) 218-8065; alanroth@mail.com

DIGITAL VIDEOGRAPHER with Sony VX-1000 and Lectrosonic radio mic. available and happy to shoot documentaries and shorts. Contact Melissa (212) 352-4141; mqh8695@is.nyu.edu

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Award-winning, exp, looking for interesting projects. Credits incl. features, docs & commercials in the U.S., Europe & Israel. Own complete Aaton Super 16 pkg & lights. Call Adam for reel. (212) 932-8255 or (917) 504-7244.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY; Looking for creative projects to lens; features, commercials, shorts, music videos & documentaries. 35 and 16mm packages avail. New York/Boston based, will travel. Call for reel: (781) 545-2609; bkarol@mediaone.net

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for interesting features, shorts, ind. projects, etc. Credits incl. features, commercials, industrials, short films, music videos. Aaton 16/S-16 pkg avail. Abe (718) 263-0010.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Owner 16mm Aaton, plus 35mm non-sync & hand-crank cameras. Experimental background; creative look. Shooting credits incl.: Features, shorts, promos, commercials & music videos. New York based, will travel. Carolyn (718) 930-7969.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ complete 16mm camera, wants to shoot your project. Resumé & reel available upon request. Call Mai Iskander (718) 623-8555; iskander@rcn.com

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ complete Arri-Zeiss 16mm pkg. Lots of indie film experience. Features, shorts and music videos. Save money and get a great looking film. Willing to travel. Rates are flexible and I work quickly. Matthew: (914) 439-5459 or (617) 244-6730.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY with Arri BL 3, Aaton XTR Prod S16/16mm, and Canon XL1 camera package is ready to shoot your project. Call Jay Silver at (718) 383-1325 for a copy of reel. email: hihosliver@earthlink.com

DOCUMENTARY VIDEOGRAPHER with extensive int'l experience (Latin America, Africa, Europe & Canada). 22 years of experience as director/producer, videographer & editor of independent documentaries broadcast on CNN Int'l, PBS, Cinemax, and CBC. Last doc premiered at Sundance Festival. Specializes in cinema-verité, social issue & multicultural projects. Robbie Leppzer, Turning Tide Productions; (800) 557-6414; leppzer@turningtide.com; www.turningtide.com.

DP/DIRECTOR WITH CAMERAS in S. Calif. Low budget film rate includes DV (NTSC or PAL) 35mm packages (even Cinemascope!), Free permits and insurance! DV editing. 3,000 square foot studio, 20K lights, dollies, cell phones, walkie talkies & grip equipment. Just finished SAG feature w/ 26 hours of footage in 10 days! No risk, money back guarantee. East coast or European travel not a problem. Ask about our Free Test Shoot policy! Visa/MC. (800) 241-5345; www.alamofilms.com

DVCAM OWNER/OPERATOR; Sony DSR-300 camera, Lowel doc light kit. LA-based DP w/ experience in award-winning docs, narratives. Up & coming, which means good resumé, very impressive reel, very low rates. Bryan (213) 483-5252; bldonnell@aol.com

EDITOR AVAILABLE: Experienced award-winning Avid editor available to work on interesting and innovative pieces. Will work dirt cheap for the chance to be challenged (docs, shorts, features). Call Kevin (212) 591-0589.

EDITOR: Experienced, skilled & inexpensive. Experience includes commercials, reels, shorts, amateur videos, TV pilot. . . Located in Manhattan. AVID available. Call Josh (917) 439-9369.

EDITOR WITH AVID: Conscientious advocate of the Invisible Cut. Comfy West Village space. AVR77, 144 gigs, Beta, VHS, DV. MC/Visa. Bill G. (212) 243-1343; gcomvid@usa.net.

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

EXPERIENCED CAMERAMAN w/ Arri SR II 16mm and Betacam SP packages. Extensive experience in features and documentaries. Edgar Gil (718) 832-1846; maesegil@earthlink.net

EXPERIENCED CINEMATOGRAPHER with crew & equipment; 16mm & 35mm. Short films & features. Vincent (212) 779-1441.

JELMACK PRODUCTIONS has a crew, Canon X-L 1 + lights + sound package to shoot your next NYC-area interview, documentary, or indie film. Contact us for our reasonable rates: (917) 568-7680 or http://www.jelmack.com

JOHN BASKO: Documentary cameraman w/ extensive international Network experience. Civil wars in Kosovo, Beirut, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Tiananmen Square student uprising. Equipment maintained by Sony. (718) 278-7869; fax: 278-6830; Johnbasko@aol.com

LOCATION SOUND: Over 20 yrs sound exp. w/ timecode Nagra & DAT, quality mics. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. Harvey & Fred Edwards, (518) 677-5720; edfilms@worldnet.att.net

PRODUCTION TEAM: Providing services ranging from budget preparation to postproduction supervision. Help for your feature, short, video or commercial. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. A.L. Films: (718) 852-6194; legitfilms@hotmail.com

Opportunities • Gigs

AGENT WANTED to represent heavily experienced video production group with extensive work done in commercial, industrial, documentary, news and animation areas. Full process. Natalie: (718) 332-2191; cell: (917) 674-4742.

ASST/ASSOC PROFESSOR, EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION: Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Dept. of Film plans to hire a tenure track asst/assoc. professor in media arts production for Fall 2000. Looking for experimental animator w/ excellent record of achievement in filmmaking, experience as a teacher & demonstrated ability to work w/ others. Must have full range of 16mm film production skills, esp. in experimental animation. Expertise in optical printing &/or computer-based digital video is desirable. MFA or equiv. professional experience is req. Screening continues until position is filled. Send resumé,

statement of teaching philosophy, VHS tape of personal animation work & names/contact info of 3 references to: Diane Kitchen, Chair, Search Committee, Film Dept., Univ. of WI-Milwaukee, Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. AA/EOE

SCRIBE VIDEO CENTER, an educational nonprofit media arts organization serving independent filmmakers & community orgs., is seeking an Administrative Director. AD is responsibile for overall financial management of organization, incl. creation of budgets & budget oversight, admin. tasks related to grants, contracts & supervision of bookkeeping staff. AD is the key staff person responsible for fundraising activities, incl. research of funding sources, proposal writing & reports. Applicants must have solid exp. in community based nonprofit &/or arts management, excellent writing & communications skills, and experience working in community settings. Salary is $27,000-$30,000 w/ health benefits. Scribe Video Center is an Equal Opportunity employer. Send letter of interest & resumé to: Ms. Judy Claude, Scribe Video Center, 1342 Cypress St., Philadelphia, PA 19107; fax: (215) 735-4710.

WELL-ESTABLISHED freelance camera group in NYC seeking professional cameramen & soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

Preproduction

ACT FOUR SCREENPLAYS, PROFESSIONAL STORY CONSULTATION Daniel Calvisi, professional story consultant for Miramax Films & indie clients. Full consultation $300; creative & commercial analysis. (212) 567-8820 (M-F 9-6 EST); http://members.aol.com/actfour4/

BUDGETS/INVESTOR PACKAGE: Experienced Line Producer will prepare script breakdowns, shooting schedules & detailed budgets. Movie Magic equipped. MC, Visa, Amex. Indie rates negotiable. Mark (212) 340-1243.

INDIE FEATURE CONSULTING: Award-winning line producer with years of indie feature and television experience. Budgets, schedules, projections, more. Movie Magic, Film Profit. (214) 328-3242.

PRODUCTION OFFICE: West 85th in NYC, fully wired all office equip, Beta, 3/4" dubbing, animation. Avid room as needed. Short or long-term. Dana (212) 501-7878 x. 222.

SU-CITY PICTURES: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic: We provide screenplay/treatment/synopsis/films-in-progress insight/analysis. Studio credentials include: Miramax & Warner Bros. Competitive rates. Brochure: (212) 219-9224; www.su-city-pictures.com

Postproduction

16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound-transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable rates. (212) 925-1500.

16MM SOUND MIX only $100/hr. Interlocked 16mm picture & tracks mixed to 16 or 35mm fullcoat. 16mm/35mm post services: picture & sound editorial, ADR, interlock screening, 16mm mag xfers (.06/ft), 16mm edgecoding (.015/ft). Call Tom (201) 741-4367.

AVID 8000 & 1000 SUITES: Pleasant, friendly, comfortable Upper West Side location. On-line & off-line, AVR 77; reasonable & affordable rates. Tech support provided. (212) 595-5002; (718) 885-0955.

AVID EDITOR: A dozen feature credits. New Media Composer w/ AVR 77 & offline rez. Beta SP, DAT, extra drives, Pro-tools editing & mixing, and your Avid or mine. Fast and easy to get along with. Credit cards accepted. Drina (212) 561-0829.

AVID IN BROOKLYN, or delivered to your 'hood. Call everyone else and then call us! We'll work with you! Avid 1000, AVR 77. Lowest prices around! Your editors or ours. No project to small or too big. Call Alex (718) 855-0216.

AVID MERIDIEN online editing suites—uncompressed, non-linear editing at great rates. Variable pricing based on off-line and on-line editing schedules. AfterEffects, Illustrator & Photoshop installed. Call Fusion Artists: (212) 684-4086.

AVID ONLINE AND OFF: Great rental prices. Media Composer XL1000, Chelsea location: (212) 242-3005. Avid 400 5.5, Beta Deck, 36GB, Upper West Side: (212) 579-4294.

AVID SUITES 9000/1000 On-line/Off-line, AVR 77 3Dfx, Beta/3/4/Hi-8/DAT/DV Decks, ProTools/PhotoShop/After-Effects. Comfortable environment, W. Side, indie friendly. 24 hr. access. Editors avail. for reasonable rates. Sean (212) 595-4400.

AVID/BETA SP DECK OR FINAL CUT PRO: Your place or mine. Choose offline MC400 w/ Beta SP or Final Cut Pro DV system. Will also rent Beta deck alone. Daily, weekly, monthly. Cheap Rates! Editor avail. (718) 852-2048; jql5212@ is.nyu.edu

BRODSKY & TREADWAY Film-to-tape masters. Reversal only. Regular 8mm, Super 8, or archival 16mm to 1" or Betacam SP. We love early B&W & Kodachrome. Scene-by-scene only. Correct frame rates. For appt. call (978) 948-7985.

DVD AUTHORING: Full DVD project management. Spruce system, compression, encoding, menu creation, authoring and replication for your film. We are nice people and we have very reasonable pricing. (212) 563-4589; 245 W. 29 St., NYC

EDIT IN SAN DIEGO'S LITTLE ITALY: State of the art Discreet Edit 5.0 nonlinear system. 90 gigs memory, component Beta, DV, S-VHS. Full audio mixing, dubbing, production office. Pleasant, professional environment, near airport, hotels & restaurants. Very competitive rates. Complete Betacam production package Sony D-30/PVV3. Visit our website: www.peteroliver.com or call (800) 497-1109.

FOR RENT: FINAL CUT PRO & HIDDEN CAMERA. Edit in our suite on Apple's FinalCut Pro with 160 Gigs (24 hours broadcast quality storage), three monitors, and all peripherals for $20/$180/$750 per hour/day/week. Rent a broadcast quality Digital Video hidden camera system for $250/day. Call Jonathan at (718) 499-2829.

POSTPRODUCTION SOUND; Composition, mixing, noise reduction, etc. I have excellent ears & I'm quick. I have the same toys as Magno or Soundone but without the inflated costs. Call (718) 237-8703.

PRODUCER WITH PRODUCTION OFFICE looking for low budget features to produce in New York. Will provide budgeting/scheduling, production personnel. Video, shorts and feature experience. Call Val at (212) 295-7878 or zelda212@ netscape.net

VIDEO PROJECTOR FOR RENT: Show your work on the big screen. $200/day, decks and sound equipment available. David (212) 362-1056.

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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

For any pending details, please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

July Events

The AIVF office will be closed from Monday July 3 through Friday July 7. We will re-open on Monday, July 10 at 11 a.m. Sorry for any inconvenience. Have a happy Fourth!

AFTER HOURS

MEMBER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE

Due to our office being closed on July's first Wednesday, there is no After Hours for this month. Feel free to access the Filmmakers Resource Library during our normal business hours of 11-6 Monday through Friday. After Hours will resume in on Wed., August 2.

MEET & GREET

Our Meet & Greet series takes a hiatus for the hot summer months of July and August. Check our calendar toward September when we'll once again be bringing the independent community access to foundation program officers and reps from distribution companies.

AIVF CO-PRESENTS

GEORGE KUCHAR: LARGE AND IN CHARGE!
AT THE 2000 NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL

When: Sat., **July 22**, 7 p.m.
Where: Walter Reade Theatre (W. 65th St./ Broadway at Lincoln Center)
Cost: Tickets are $5 AIVF members with card at box office; $9 general public.
Walter Reade Box Office: (212) 875-5600.



Who's the *real* George Kuchar?

A rare personal appearance by video diary king George Kuchar, who will present some of his latest work and engage in banter with videomaker Steve Reinke. George will even answer your questions! This special evening will feature a selection of George's short tapes from 1999 and this year, including: *Trilogy of the Titans; Culinary Linkage; Art Asylum; Celestial Cravings; Chigger Country.*

AIVF CO-PRESENTS

THE FIRST TIME:
PANEL DISCUSSION AT OUTFEST,
THE LOS ANGELES GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL

When: Sat., **July 8**, 2 p.m.
Where: The Village at Ed Gould Plaza (1125 N McCadden Place), Los Angeles
Cost: Free to all; no RSVP necessary.

Showing a completed first feature at a film festival is sort of like a college graduation: a celebration of endings and beginnings. But behind the cliches lurk some big questions: What comes next? Will the next film be any easier? And what is the role of film festivals in nurturing filmmakers and extending the lives of their films? Join a spirited discussion among debut feature filmmakers whose work can be seen in OUTFEST 2000, including Jamie Babbit (*But I'm a Cheerleader*); May Guzman (*Desi's Looking for a New Girl*) and Lane Janger (*Just One Time*). Don't miss the stellar line up of films and programs at this year's festival! For further info: www.outfest.org or the OUTFEST Ticket Hotline at 323/960-2394.

Los Angeles Outfest Gay + Lesbian Film Festival

AIVF CO-SPONSORS

SELECT SCREENINGS AT THE WALTER READE THEATRE, NYC, PRESENTED BY THE FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members may attend specific events for discounted prices. Please show membership card at box office. The Walter Reade Theatre is located at Lincoln center, 165 W. 65th St. at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

THE NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL
JULY 21-27

Don't miss this week of aesthetic exploration at the Film Society at Lincoln Center. AIVF members get in to all festival programs at the $5 discounted ticket rate.
FFI: www.filmlinc.com/nyvf

Coming in August & September

DV TO 35MM TRANSFERS: A COMPARISON OF LABS

For all those shooting on DV and dreaming of seeing your film on the silver screen, have we got a panel for you! Ten labs from around the world have transferred test footage shot on a Canon XL1 in PAL and NTSC. Plus, the same footage was shot on Super 16mm and transferred to 35mm. Accompanying an article by Robert Goodman in the August/September issue of *The Independent* will be a public presentation of the results. See samples of the test footage, additional clips from the labs, and bring your questions to lab reps.
When: September during the Independent Feature Film Market.
Where: tba. Watch this page for details, or visit www.aivf.org.

AIVF BOARD ELECTIONS

VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Only paid members are eligible to vote in the AIVF board elections. If your membership expires on or before October 15, and you do not renew, you will not be eligible to vote. To verify your membership status or to renew, contact members@aivf.org or call (212) 807-1400 x. 236. Nominee statements and ballots will be mailed in late October and responses are due postmarked Friday, December 1.

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, and information services. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

FIVF THANKS





Academy Foundation
The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation
Forest Creatures Entertainment, Inc.
Heathcote Art Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
LEF Foundation
Albert A. List Foundation, Inc.
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
New York State Council on the Arts

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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the Independent
FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

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LIVE VIDEO: Continued from page 37

Images are projected behind the performers, so the audience has the choice whether to watch the artists producing them (for example, with a camera millimeters away from a melting honey bear or inside someone's mouth) or to gaze at the bear's curvy pastel silhouette, mixed onscreen with an exercise video, while hearing a feedback loop of polkas.

All these live video teams critically recontextualize mass-cultural detritus, with approaches that vary from a "cool" machine aesthetic (Fleabotics) to a punk sensibility (Stackable Thumb) to a mocking/melancholy remix of trash corporate culture (McCoys and Animal Charm). Animal Charm remixes QVC in sharp comment on commodity culture; the McCoys poke fun at corporate jargon; Fleabotics and Stackable Thumb revel in the materiality of trash itself, recreating it in a sort of digital Merzbau.

In live performance, the bodily character of live video's hardware and software reveals itself as mutable and fragile. It thus invites participants to experience our own bodily corporeality, by reminding us that we are in non-virtual space. While the military and commercial applications from which they were developed attempt to conceal the platforms on which they were built, effectively making the interface opaque, artists' live mixing platforms make the interface physical and transparent. Live video explores society's refuse, prying into the cracks in virtual culture, in order to reveal its underlying material and economic structures. Yet these low-tech digital works also re-enchant the world and our material and transient love affair with it.

Additional information and sources:

Stackable Thumb [http://www. stackable.com/]

Screen [http://www.interport.net/~er/]

The Appearance Machine [http://appearancemachine.com/]

Airworld [http://www.airworld.net]

Jennifer and Kevin McCoy [http://home.earthlink.net/~mccoy/]

Video Data Bank, distributor of Animal Charm [http://www.vbd.com]

Animal Charm [http://www.animalcharm.com]

Laura Marks is writer, curator, and assistant professor of film studies at Carleton University in Ottawa. She recently published The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema Embodiment and the Senses.

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ROUNDTABLE: Continued from page 41

And why do you self-distribute?

Lerner: The only distributors that would take the film are these guys like Canyon, and distribution for them means they'll put it in the catalog and not much more than that, right? I don't mean to bad-mouth Canyon; it's sort of heroic what they're doing, but at the same token, it goes more places if I'm in charge of that than if it were on the shelf in San Francisco.

I've also been really successful in getting my films shown in art spaces, museums, nonprofit artist-run media arts centers, places like 911, festivals, and universities. There's a certain academic appeal about my work, which raises issues that appeals to the cultural studies segments, so that's a big part of it.

Do you put together any sort of study guide?

Lerner: No, but I probably should. Not enough time.

Do you, Jay?

Rosenblatt: I did for two films. It helped me psychologically. On one of my films, I was getting a lot of returns. I think when they saw the film, it was a little too out there. That was *The Smell of Burning Ants*; it's about the pain of growing up male and boyhood cruelty. It sold to a lot of gender studies departments and women's studies and sociology. Anyway, I don't think people got the film, so I decided I should do a study guide. I think I've gotten a few less returns because of that; it's hard to tell.

Gibbs: Was that just after *Human Remains*? Did the success of that film help contribute to interest in your earlier one?

Rosenblatt: Actually, *Human Remains* is not doing very well educationally.

Really? What's your guess on why?

Rosenblatt: I have no idea. I thought it was the post office. [*laughs*]

Reynold, what's your best distribution story or effort?

Reynolds: I'm not trying to pursue all these money things. I'm view it more like a piece of art. When you have a piece of art in the gallery, you don't try to sell it immediately. You hold onto a collection of work; it's yours, and you show it…

Gibbs and Jolley: That's absolutely not true!

Reynolds: As time goes by, the artwork becomes more valuable and it has perspective. But films have less and less value as time goes by.

If Atom wants to come and buy my film and show it all over the world, they can do that. They don't even have to pay me. But they haven't offered. In general, all we do is enter a bunch of festivals! It's kinda a black hole.

But festivals can act as a springboard for other exhibition opportunities.

Rosenblatt: With experimental film, part of it has to start with the curators and programmers having the courage to fail sometimes and to cultivate an audience. Again, I go back to Ann Arbor as a good example. Twenty or 30 years ago, they didn't have an audience for experimental film, but they kept showing it. And people started appreciating it; they started learning about it. It's like modern art—it's not immediate. It's not like realism, where you just get it right away. So I think Sundance is going to have to have the courage to stay with it.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

SALONS

THE AIVF SALONS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. For more information: (212) 807-1400 x 236; members@aivf.org; www.aivf.org

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 916-8496; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 "N" Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, engntwrk@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, www.mifs.org/salon or (414) 276-8563

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668 or dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
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Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

This column commemorates the 25th anniversity of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the July issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.

"Merely recognizing the fact that color film fades is useless. We must act now or the films we make in the 1980s will be subjected to the same indiscriminate destruction as all those made in the past 40 years. Working with film stock that is guaranteed to deteriorate in a matter of months is insulting and insane. We have no choice but to take action to correct this situation which is absolutely intolerable."

Martin Scorsese,
letter to the editor, 1980

"Every situation, every mix of resources and requirements is singular. But super 16 will be right for more than a few, for its time has clearly arrived. And its natural beneficiary is the independent."

D.W. Leitner, 1981

"It will be a few years before the impact of Sundance on independent filmmaking, and filmmaking in general, is felt. According to [Sterling] Van Wagenen, Redford himself understands that getting a film made and *also* seen by audiences 'implies political solutions as much as it implies financial solutions.' Let's hope Sundance can tackle both."

Renee Shafransky, 1982

"The last figure I saw for movie theaters was that five are owned by black people in the U.S. and they show garbage like all the others. Name me a black-owned movie theater in Harlem or Bedford-Stuyvesant! They don't exist."

Denise Oliver, 1983

"The universal 'villains' of theatrical self-distribution appear to be New York's advertising cost and the entire City of Los Angeles, which was derided time and again by various filmmakers as one of the worst places in the country to exhibit an independent film."

Susan Linfield, 1984

"*The Times of Harvey Milk* was originally the subtitle. At no point did we ever think of doing a biographical film about Harvey. It was always about situating the man in history in order to understand why he was important. Heroes are heroes because they're a product of their times."

Robert Epstein, 1985

"The potential of Irish independent film was evident from the content of the recent New York festival, so one can only hope government plans for the establishment of a permanent film body will succeed in the near future."

Helena Mulkerns, 1988

"Any current account of feminist video and film production is woefully incomplete without considering the particularities of how that work is initially conceived, funded, and produced; how it is disseminated; where and how it shows; and who sees it."

Helen Lee, 1990



"John Ford, who recognized and effectively uses the desolate, powerful beauty of the American West, would today find himself faces with a hose of unfamiliar restrictions by government agencies, the Navajo tribe, and environmental watchdogs. But these are different times that call for filmmakers to work creatively with local communities, commissions, and environmentalists while remaining open to the land that will speak to them if they listen."

Lorri Shundich, 1992

"Make no mistake: simple, inexpensive nonlinear editing for video and film is just around the corner. However, using Quicktime today, in the summer of 1993, is expensive and for the adventurous. The people you now see using Quicktime are pioneers in the truest sense: some of them will profit from their risk-taking, some will leave their bones to bleach in the hot desert sun."

Luke Matthew Hones, 1993

"Asked why an established durector would assist a younger filmmaker, *Reservoir Dogs* executive producer Monte Hellman acknowledged, 'It's an identification of the plight you've been through yourself. You know the odds are high that you will come across another Quentin, but when you do and can help him, it's like you're giving back what you took out of the system, when you as a young filmmaker, were starting out.' "

Robert L. Seigel, 1994

"It has perhaps, gotten better in the past 10 years, slightly better. And I guess it's better than it was 20 years ago. But it's not as good as it should be. I think [Native American] people are qualified to tell their own story."

Roy Bigcrane, 1995

"It is ironic that just as we are seeing more diverse audiences, traditional sources of funding are all but disappearing. Many would argue that video is facing an identity crisis in the face of new media and the success of independent cinema."

Stephen Vitiello, 1996

"Monetary demands have increasingly led film tour organizers to seek financial support from corporate entities, the very institutions that such tours were intended to supplant. Corporate sponsorship has been called both the road to new audiences and the price filmmakers must pay to get their work seen; reality, however, lies somewhere in between."

Mark J. Huisman, 1997

"The small gauge has a unique, inimitable palette and texture. Even so, Kodak moved to discontinue production of Super 8 sound cartridges and many print stocks a few years ago. This has put Super 8 filmmaking on the endangered species list."

Donna Cameron, 1998

"Both in process and in conception, *The Blair Witch Project* is the result of something the Haxan filmmakers called 'Method Filmmaking,' an approach directly employed to bring this tale of supernatural horror the disquieting patina of realism."

Adam Pincus, 1999

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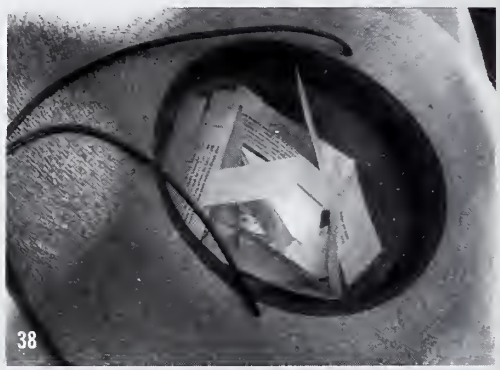
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Friend or Foe?

Blockbuster Attempts to Woo Independents

BY BERNARDO RUIZ



Blockbuster is expanding its empire while extending what appears to be a friendlier hand to independent films.

"Our customers are telling us they want to see more independent films."
—Liz Green, Blockbuster

VIDEO RETAIL CHAIN BLOCKBUSTER INC. IS determined to be known for more than just late fees and microwave popcorn. The Dallas-based company aims to become the world's biggest single distributor of independent film and has now started financing productions, according to company spokesperson Liz Green. "We're hoping to build an appreciation of independent and short films and bring them to a wider audience," she says. Indeed, since January 1999 the company has acquired approximately 100 independent titles and has just entered into a deal with next-generation media company AtomFilms. But the apparent shift in the mega-corporation's strategy has some independent filmmakers wary. "Blockbuster is the enemy of true movie fans and all filmmakers," wrote *Film Threat*'s Chris Gore. So has the company Quentin Tarantino once called "the Great Satan" gone indie?

Blockbuster has had a troubled and conflicted past with edgy titles. In 1991, Blockbuster banned NC-17 films such as *Henry & June* and *Last Tango in Paris* from its stores in response to a campaign by the right-wing American Family Association. Todd Solondz's *Happiness* and Larry Clark's *Kids* have also been excluded from its shelves because both films were unrated. Oliver Stone's director's cut of *Natural Born Killers* was also banned.

So why has the video rental chain stepped into the film-financing ring? "Our customers are telling us they want to see more independent films," explains Green. Dean Wilson, Blockbuster's chief merchandising officer who is responsible for purchasing Blockbuster titles, acquired over 70 independent titles at film festivals across the country in 1999 alone. At the Sundance Film Festival, he agreed to invest $2 million in Valerie Breiman's *Love and Sex*, which stars Famke Janssen, Jon Favreau, and Noah Emmerich. Blockbuster offered the advance against domestic revenues from the film. The company also plans to pay an additional $1.5 million towards P&A, making domestic theatrical distribution very attractive. Isaac H. Eaton's *Shadow Hours*, which tells the story of a recovering addict who steps into a night-world of "Dionysian pleasures and debauchery," was also picked up alongside Myles Connell's debut, *The Opportunists*, starring Christopher Walken. In addition, Blockbuster recently announced its own "Independent Filmmaker Award," a $100,000 prize plus distribution deal which will go to a first-time indie director [http://promo.blockbuster.com/ifa/].

Wilson recently told the *New York Times*, "We just love film and want to support it." But clearly the reasons for this initiative have more to do with rounding up a lion's share of the market than with simply supporting artistic independence. Home video sales amount to more than half of the profits generated by an average studio release, and Blockbuster holds roughly 40% of the video rental market. However, in the last few years, the explosion of independent film, digital, and net-based media have given the media giant cause for concern. Blockbuster is already the video rental arm of Viacom Inc., which owns Paramount Pictures, Simon and Schuster, Spelling Entertainment, MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, TV Land, Showtime, UPN, and 18 other U.S. television stations including CBS. In an effort to maintain its dominant position in the marketplace, as well as invest in growth areas, the company is actively getting into the financing business, though Wilson claims not to want to "out-do" the studios.

The company, which went public in August of 1999, is seeking to expand beyond rentable home entertainment. The expansion is "part of our commitment to become more than just a bricks and mortar company," explains Green. "Our job is to deliver home entertainment in whatever format our customers want, be it satellite, video rental, DVD, digital, or home delivery." Over the past few months, the company has announced a series of deals, including a video-on-demand deal with personal TV company TiVo, a strategic alliance with AOL to create broadband content, and an agreement with MGM. Most significant, perhaps, is its $10 million investment in AtomFilms. In June the two companies announced the creation of Short Takes [http://atomfilms.blockbuster.com] a co-branded section of Blockbuster.com which features five new short films each week in its "feature" section and more than 20 archived films, including a variety of animation, drama, comedy, and documentaries in a streaming video digital format.

"The Great Satan is now the great supporter of Sundance," *Shadow Hours* producer Peter McAlevey recently told the *New York Times*. With *Easy Rider* images popping up in a Tommy Hilfiger ad cam-

paign, and when Kevin Smith's ultra low-budget *Clerks* briefly became a primetime network cartoon show, the back and forth between indie and corporate culture is a given. Blockbuster, with more than 5,000 stores in the U.S. alone, is a big player in the mainstream. What is yet to be determined is for how long and to what extent the company will remain committed to distributing independent features and shorts.

Bernardo Ruiz is a freelance writer and filmmaker.

Apple Crumbles:

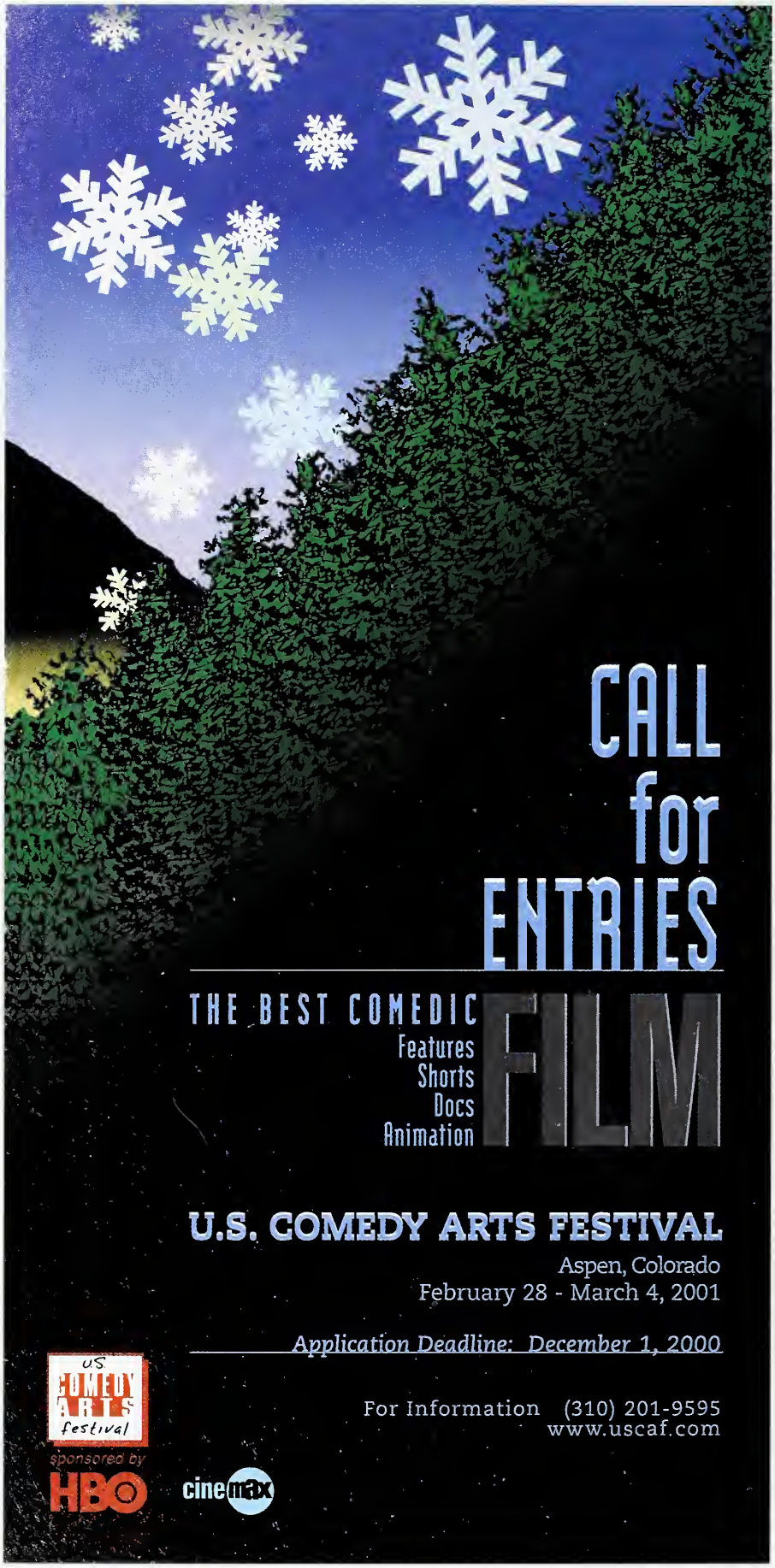
The Demise of the National Educational Media Network

BY BRENDAN PETERSON

IT'S A SAD DAY FOR EDUCATIONAL MEDIA. Citing "severe financial difficulties" in a letter to creditors, the National Educational Media Network (NEMN) closed its doors this March.

For 30 years NEMN has served as a resource center and meeting ground for producers, distributors, and users of educational films, videos, and interactive multimedia. The group's annual Apple Awards Competition and concurrent Media Market served as a national forum for educational media professionals to network, negotiate, and navigate the future. The demise of NEMN leaves many educational media professionals out in the cold.

"It's a great blow to me personally, as I devoted 12 years of my life to co-directing the NEMN festival and media market," says Kate Spohr, a former employee of the National Educational Media Network. [*Despite repeated efforts,* The Independent *was unable to get a comment from the outgoing NEMN administration. —Ed.*] Over the last four years Spohr has attended the conference as a distributor for the University of California Extension Center for Media



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and Independent Learning. "It's also a blow to me professionally, as it will be to the whole community of filmmakers and distributors who work in educational media in this country."

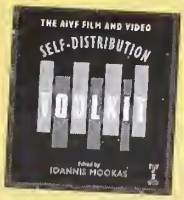


Since the American Educational Film Festival went out of business in 1990, the National Educational Media Network has been the only game in town for educational media professionals attempting to see and buy new films and videos. And as cuts in arts funding at the local, state, and national level continue, organizations like NEMN that rely on government subsidies are hung out to dry. Because of this harsh reality, it's not likely that new media arts organizations will fill the gap NEMN has left.

Lawrence Daressa, co-director of California Newsreel, the oldest nonprofit documentary and educational video production and distribution center in the nation, sees the end of NEMN as a sign of the times. "The closing of NEMN reveals fault lines in the educational media community. It's a reflection of the declining educational film business," says Daressa. For Daressa and the California Newsreel, the strength of NEMN was that the annual meeting brought people together.

"There is already a disconnect between buyers and producers regarding what type of educational media is needed," he says. "The conference offered a real opportunity to discuss accountability between users and producers. It's not that people aren't willing to buy—the market is robust. There's just not that much good educational video being produced. Now there is nowhere to discuss these issues. That's probably the biggest drawback of NEMN's closing."

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AIVF Founding Principles:

1 The Association is an organization of and for independent video- and filmmakers.

2 The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job, that it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.

3 The Association works, through the combined efforts of the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5 The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

Clearly distributors will be at a loss without the annual market and the chance to share information with other educational media professionals. But it's educational filmmakers who are most likely to feel the sting of a world without NEMN. Last year's Apple Film Festival, held in Oakland, California, received more than 1,000 entries. Each year hundreds of indie filmmakers from all over the country flocked to the conference to mingle, make deals, and find just the right audience for their work. Over the last decade filmmakers like the late Marlon Riggs (*Black Is, Black Ain't*) and Oscar-winner Jessica Yu (*Breathing Lessons*) have taken home Apple Awards.

"Prior to the establishment of the NEMN market in 1987, filmmakers shopped their work from one distributor to another," says Kate Spohr. "This was a laborious and expensive process. The NEMN market created, for the first time, a truly competitive environment for the acquisition of educational videos. Many filmmakers waited until the NEMN market to make deals, because they knew they would get better offers at the market. The best new educational releases frequently generated bidding wars between distributors during and after the NEMN market each year—a phenomenon that was unheard of prior to 1987."

At a time when more and more producers, in search of a big payoff, make educational films for a television audience rather than a classroom of students, the amount of quality productions for educators has declined. Now without NEMN's annual face-to-face schmooze-fest, both artists and business people will have to find new ways to connect and keep the market alive.

"We entered many of our new releases into the Apple Awards competition each year and featured the Apple Awards in our promotional brochures and catalogs," says Spohr about the University of California videos. "Perhaps more importantly, we acquired many titles at the Media Market, sometimes as many as 30 percent of our new releases for the year. The loss of NEMN leaves a void that will be difficult for any existing media arts organization to fill."

Brendan Peterson [swordfsh@wenet.net] is a critic and writer who covers independent filmmakers and festivals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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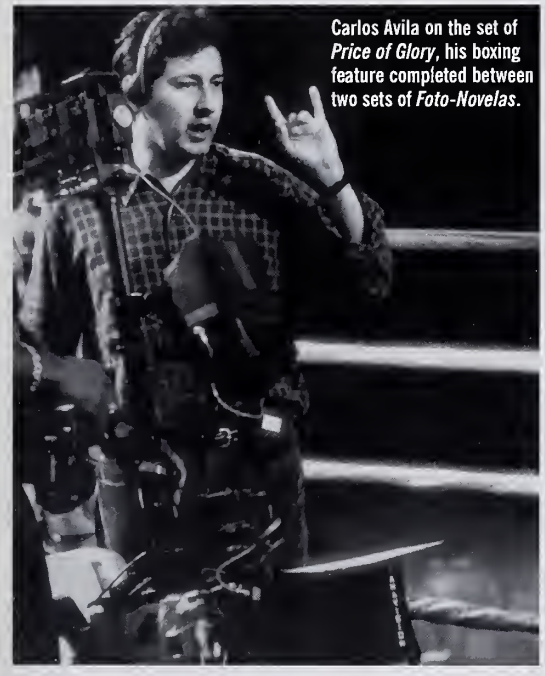
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Carlos Avila

Foto-Novelas

BY CARLOS SAN MIGUEL

APTLY DESCRIBED AS A LATINO *TWILIGHT ZONE*, Carlos Avila's multi-award winning PBS series, *Foto-Novelas*, was a genuine public television hit back in 1997. The four half-hour autonomous episodes blended fantasy with magical realism and science fiction. "People loved the series, the creativity in which we approached the subject matter," says the writer/director/producer. "There is a tremendous enthusiasm for wanting to see more episodes."



Carlos Avila on the set of *Price of Glory*, his boxing feature completed between two sets of *Foto-Novelas*.

So much so that public television's funding agencies are ready and willing to fund another set of these Latino dramas. "CPB (Corporation for Public Broadcasting) gave me a substantial amount of money from their Challenge Fund and after that, the Latino Public Broadcasting Project awarded us a grant as well," Avila says.

Avila's winning formula is strongly rooted in popular forms of Latino literary culture. "Foto-novelas" and "historietas" are a sort of weekly comic book, but with adult-themed stories. These picture stories, which include either hand-drawn art or staged photos, defy the concept of 'high' or 'low' art and are read and appreciated by people in all echelons of society. The self-contained stories don't involve superheroes, but rather focus on everyday people. Some stories combine the ordinary with the supernatural, sometimes referred to as "magical realism." In recent times, themes have expanded to include the realities of AIDS, crime, romance, and politics, but they are always tinted with a moral or educational slant.

Sometimes a misunderstood concept, "magical realism," often ascribed to authors like Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, can simply be described as "when the magical becomes real and the real becomes magical." A staple of some Latino literature, an example of "magical realism" could be when a young man's passionate burning desire for a woman causes his skin to scald or when the appearance of a long dead relative is appreciated rather than feared. Often common threads inherent in portrayals of "magical realism" include the aspects of family, love, danger and religion.

"The inspiration (for the series) came from growing up in a Mexican-American household, seeing people fascinated by these very popular literary genres," says Avila. "I thought that because they were so pervasive in my community, it might be a wonderful way to tell Latino stories."

The first series included tales about a wrongly imprisoned man who through experimental technology is given great knowledge, but then must painstakingly give it up when he proves his innocence, and another about a Costa Rican boy, adopted by an Anglo-American family, who confronts his fears of assimilation by magically transforming his bedroom into his lush tropical homeland.

As for the new episodes Avila is somewhat tight-lipped. "They're not written in script form yet," he says. "One is based on a short by a Salvadorean writer, Mario Bien Castro, and another one is an original short story that I came up with."

When asked about the shows' "magical realism," Avila says, "They're all very different stories. They're not all 'magical realist' fables. I think 'magical realism' is a very sexy buzzword that people glom onto and get real excited about. My hope is that people will see these stories as well-told contemporary human stories and not just these quaint 'ethnic' tales." In explaining the stories' universal aspects, Avila says, "They deal with the search for belonging, redemption, the quest for knowledge and self-worth, the need to overcome personal failure, and the human impulse to be the fullest expression of one's self. That said, they are also funny, entertaining, engaging, and visually striking."

Initially funded by ITVS (Independent Television Service), *Foto-Novelas* was at first turned down, but after making a case for it, Avila was able to get the funding organization interested in both his ideas and approach.

At that point in his career, the young, determined director had already introduced himself to the filmmaking world with his UCLA graduate thesis film, *Distant Water*, in 1991. The film caught people's attention at several festivals, including Sundance, and led to Avila making *La Carpa* in 1993 for PBS's *American Playhouse*. Both films were period pieces showcasing Avila's directing/writing talent and affinity for Latino culture.

Since *Foto-Novelas* took off in 1997, Avila has made his feature film directing-debut with *Price of Glory*, produced by Esparza/Katz Productions (*Selena*) for New Line Cinema. He's currently back at work on the next set of *Foto-Novelas*. "What I'm attracted to about this collaboration with PBS is, I love the creative freedom. I love the fact that they are responsive to the budget needs of each of these shows [and] allow me to do shows on this level with the production value they deserve."

Aiming to shoot the second four-part series in early 2001 with a PBS airdate the following fall, Avila intends to turn over the directors' reins to some up-and-coming talent. "In this situation, I want to direct just maybe one of the shows and serve more as an executive producer and have other directors and writers come in," he says. Avila hopes his anthology series will help in positively portraying the vast Latino community. "The nearly 30 million Latinos that live in the United States come from so many different countries and different regions that it is critical to acknowledge their uniqueness," he says. "Latino culture in the U.S. is expanding and exploding and it would be ridiculous to ignore it because in one form or another it is going to continue to manifest itself."

To find out more about the *Foto-Novelas* series, see: www.pbs.org/itvs/fotonovelas

Carlos San Miguel is pursuing a career in film & TV and on stage as an actor/writer and director.

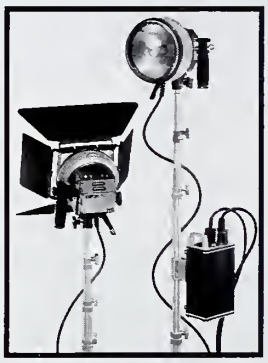


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Hilary Birmingham

What Happened to Tully

BY HOLLY WILLIS

IN MANY WAYS, WRITER/DIRECTOR HILARY Birmingham taught herself filmmaking. Granted, this isn't such an extraordinary feat, except for the fact that her first feature film, *What Happened to Tully*, is an emotionally sensitive and visually exquisite work that has won major awards at its first festival outings.



The film combines understated performances with sweeping landscapes to tell the story of a Nebraska farmer (Bob Burrus) and his two sons (Anson Mount and Glenn Fitzgerald), and their struggle to understand each other. When the film premiered in April at this year's Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, it won both the Critics' prize and the Best Director prize, and went on to earn the Audience Award at the Gen Art Film Festival in New York.

Birmingham earned her Master's degree in English Lit from Georgetown University, then worked as a story editor at Largo Entertainment, and learned the ins and outs of film production working as an associate producer and director of development with documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple. When she decided to make her own movies, she started in documentary, figuring that she'd have a better shot at remaining close to her own material. But finding funding proved difficult at best. Eventually Birmingham went to Hungary to take some time off to think. Her life-changing decision? She decided to try her hand at narrative filmmaking.

During all of this, Birmingham had been carrying around a 15-page short story titled *What Happened to Tully*. "I read the story in 1992," she says. "I loved it, but never really thought about making it into a film until I met Matt Drake, who became my co-writer." Drake, who currently lives and writes in Los Angeles, was living in Budapest at the time, and although he'd never written a screenplay, was amenable to trying his hand at writing. "Because I'd known the story for so long, it had what seemed to be an easily attained scope," Birmingham continues. "I promised Matt that if he wrote the screenplay, I'd produce it."

This promise initiated an intense writing collaboration. Drake began the screenplay's first draft; he sent it to Birmingham in New York, who responded with notes. Eventually, over the long back-and-forth writing endeavor, their roles shifted, and Birmingham began to write while Drake edited. "The writing process was incredible, both personally and professionally," says Birmingham. "Because we couldn't talk face to face but had to communicate by writing, we had to be very specific in our comments. I would work as hard as I could to explain what I meant."

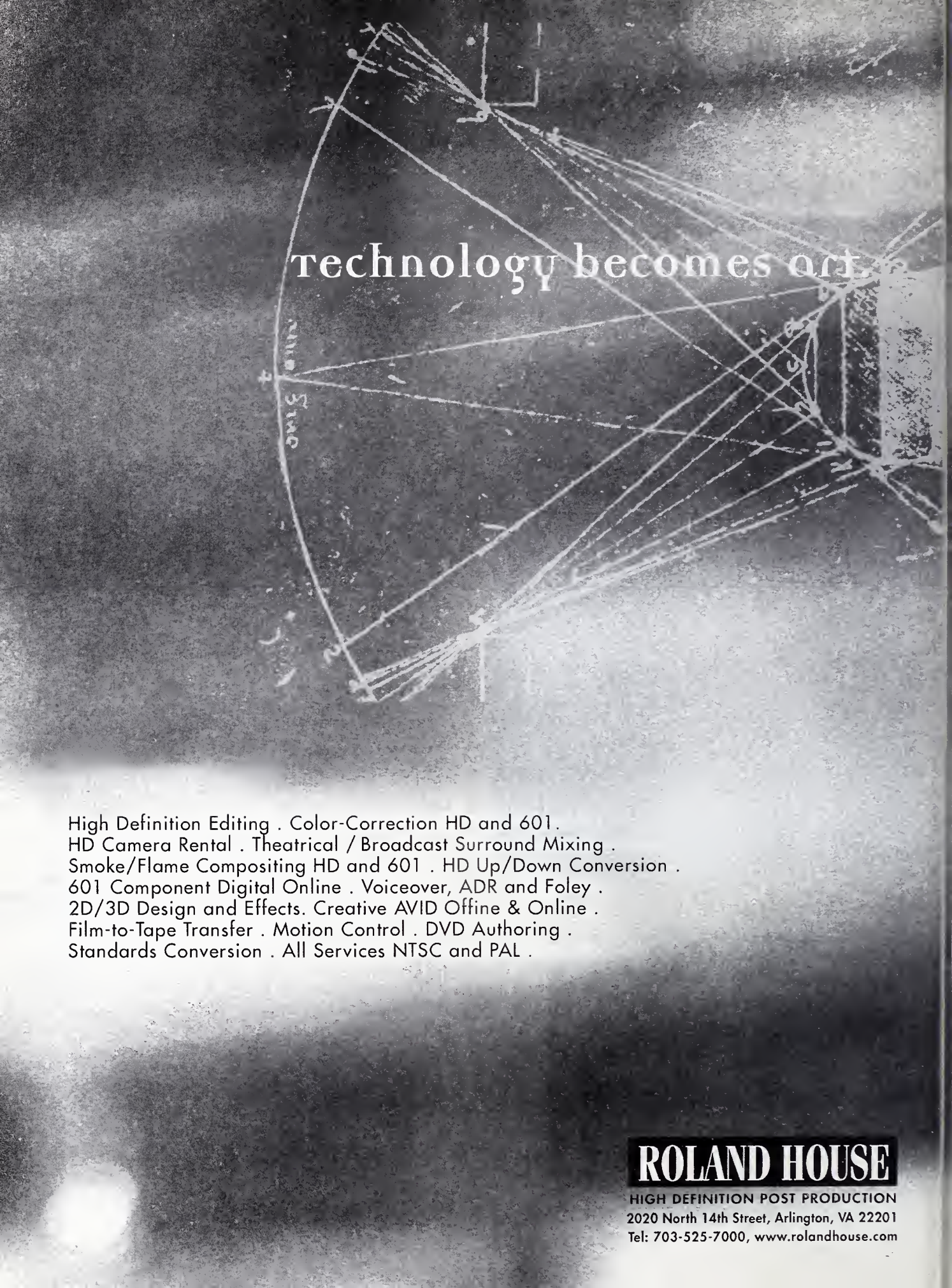
The decision to direct the film happened almost as effortlessly as becoming the co-writer. Birmingham had always wanted to direct, but didn't feel prepared. One day, she and the film's producer, Annie Sundberg, were moving Sundberg's car from one side of the street to the other while discussing who they should hire as a director. "She said, 'Why don't you direct?' " recalls Birmingham, "and I said that I couldn't. I didn't know how to work with actors, and it was just too overwhelming. But then I thought, 'Why not?' So in the span of time that it took to move the car across the street, I had decided to direct the film."

What followed was a hasty series of classes in which Birmingham tried to glean the filmmaking skills she'd need. "The thing I felt most terrified about was arriving on set and not knowing how to storyboard or how to put together a shot list," she says. "I knew enough to know that I needed that material to communicate well. But I also took a lot of workshops to learn how to talk with actors—this is a language that takes a while to develop. I also took producing workshops that were invaluable, and I watched four or five movies a week. I was basically creating a personal curriculum to get ready and trying to distill as much information as quickly as I could."

This cobbled-together education worked. In June of 1999 when she and her crew moved to Omaha, Nebraska, to begin preproduction, Birmingham had enough experience to feel relatively comfortable, and once the shoot actually started, her filmmaking skills flourished. Working with DP John Foster, for example, Birmingham opted for lots of wide shots and plenty of space. "The visual style was something that we came to," she says. "It's intimately connected to the landscape and the pace of the story. We wanted the feeling of open space, like you're breathing the same air as the characters and your attention isn't being forced in a particular direction with close-ups." This instinct was right-on, and similarly, Birmingham was also able to elicit tremendously delicate performances from her cast. Overall, the film has a feeling of gentle power and strength, and announces the arrival of a new American director.

For info on *What Happened to Tully*, contact director Hilary Birmingham at (212) 477-4765; tellnews@aol.com

Holly Willis is the editor of RES *magazine, and writes on independent film and video.*



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CINEMASCOUT

Creative Geography for the Electronic Age

BY KAREN VOSS



Just four of the thousands of locations available through the California Film Commission's impressive, free online location scouting resource, Cinemascout.com.

Cinemascout.com seems like it can meet the most esoteric of location needs, from rice paddies to medieval castles, from the deserts of Africa to a corrugated steel hazardous waste facility.

AS I JOURNEYED DEEP INTO THE CALIFORNIA Film Commission's dense online location image library [www.cinemascout.com], my thoughts turned to Soviet editing experiments of the 1920s. I wondered what Lev Kuleshov, who "discovered" the cinematic principle of creative geography (where parts of remote spaces could, when deftly edited together, create the illusion of a unified space), would do with all these places at his fingertips. The fact that online location scouting sites make finding sites easier almost seems beside the point.

Almost gamelike in structure, Cinemascout.com compiles a massive image index of Californian sites. This is the commission's subtle and seductive coercion to keep filming stateside. The site contains over 8,000 images of more than 5,000 locations with an expected 10,000-plus available by the end of the year. The site seems like it can meet the most esoteric of location needs, from rice paddies to medieval castles, from the deserts of Africa to a corrugated steel hazardous waste facility.

Cinemascout is easy to navigate—and free. A menu flanking the left side of the site offers categories ranging from agricultural areas to industrial sites to parks to residential areas. Each category in turn yields more specified subsets (such as "fish farms" under "agricultural"). Clicking on the subsets unfurls an even more exotic level of specificity—I could, for example, demand fresh- or saltwater fishfarms.

The level of architectural detail available is stunning to the point of inspiring new scenarios. Clicking across Beaux Arts gymnasiums, 1800s style restaurants with mirrored walls, gilded deco ballrooms, and concrete structures with mechanical skylights propelled a creative rush. An abandoned military silo in Chico, for example, cheap and malevolent, needs to appear in some sort of caper. This kind of location gallery allows you to think through a more intimate and poetic narrative connection to *mise-en-scene*.

Most sites carry several images and allow you to shift vantage and/or zoom in and out, while offering an array of sizes and resolutions for each of the images so you don't waste your afternoon waiting for a download. You can specify a small geographical search quadrant, so if you want your sites all within a five-mile radius, Cinemascout can help in pinpointing procedures. A banner across the top of the site allows you to search the image catalogue by "project" or "word." The first allows you to find a place you may have seen in another filmed work. So if you wanted, for example, to arrange your project's locations as a subtle meta-commentary on those in *Chinatown*, then this site could help you make that happen. The "word" function allows you to enter your own phrase, such as "heliport" if you don't want to spend the time hypothesizing about what category it might be in.

On the business side, each site's image gallery is accompanied by a pop-up listing of jurisdiction, permit procedures, contact liaison, prices for most sites, the factors that affect pricing, insurance requirements, as well as the least amount of time needed to schedule your shoot. Cinemascout.com is an enabling resource for an independent who might not initially know about location-securing procedures and because of budget constraints has to do it solo.

Karen Voss is a doctoral candidate at USC's School of Cinema-TV, a freelance writer, and general enthusiast of the independent ethos.











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Licensemusic.com Takes the Blues Out of Music Rights

ANYONE WHO'S GONE THROUGH THE Kafkaesque nightmare of getting clearances and paying for music rights in an independent film will be pleased to know that the whole experience just got a lot easier (and cheaper) thanks to a San Francisco-based start-up Licensemusic.com. In the end, it could end up saving you weeks, if not months, of searching and negotiations, and costing about one-third what you might otherwise shell out on legal fees and traditional licensing arrangements.



Good to the last note: From Peter Bolush's $900 short, *Geezers*, with music cleared courtesy of Licensemusic.com for $11.

Perhaps the reason Licensemusic.com works so well is because the person behind it is not so much an entrepreneur as a musician with a background in film scoring. Gerd Leonhard, president and CEO of the company, which officially began operating in April, earned a music degree from Berklee College in Boston and went on to teach as well as produce music for numerous films and television advertisements. In 1997, he received a grant to study the possibility of selling music over the Internet and, based on that research, decided to target film production houses, ad agencies, and multimedia firms in much the same way that Getty Images supplies visual graphics to publications and agencies over the web—which is not surprising, since Getty is a major investor in Licensemusic.com.

The real boon is for small, overlooked independent filmmakers and film students who don't have the time or the budget to secure licensing for music. The website features 1.2 million tracks of music from all over the world—ranging from Mozart violin concertos to Australian digeridoo recordings—all listed according to musical style, region, and even the "mood" that the filmmaker is looking for.

Boston-based independent filmmaker Peter Bolush was one of the first people to use Licensemusic.com. He found a track of traditional Irish music called "Donegal Tale" for his $900-budget short *Geezers*, and secured the rights for only $11. "It's a great, fully orchestrated piece that I found in the bargain bin," says Bolush, who describes his previous experiences with music licensing as "a mindboggling, frustrating, and extremely expensive process." Although EMI offers a similar direct service, Bolush says their minimum rates were $3,000 for using just a snippet of a pop song.

The site offers scores from musicians and composers that range from Beethoven to DJ Shadow, and styles from zydeco to bebop. A panel of reviewers selects the music and also reviews licensing deals prior to posting the song title on the site. Licensing agreements are available for the U.S. plus 25 other countries, and users are coming from as far afield as Finland and India to avail of the service. All song titles are rated according to licensing cost, and by year's end, Leonhard says, half a million songs will be instantly downloadable.

The average cost for a music license through the website is about $1,500, but licensing deals for student films are as low as $50, and distribution options can also be purchased for a small fee, in case the film gets picked up. Non-distributed feature films can get music licensing for an average of $80. For the low- to no-budget feature that needs a touch of ambient techno, salsa, or tango, Licensemusic.com is a blessing from the film gods.

RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor at The Independent.

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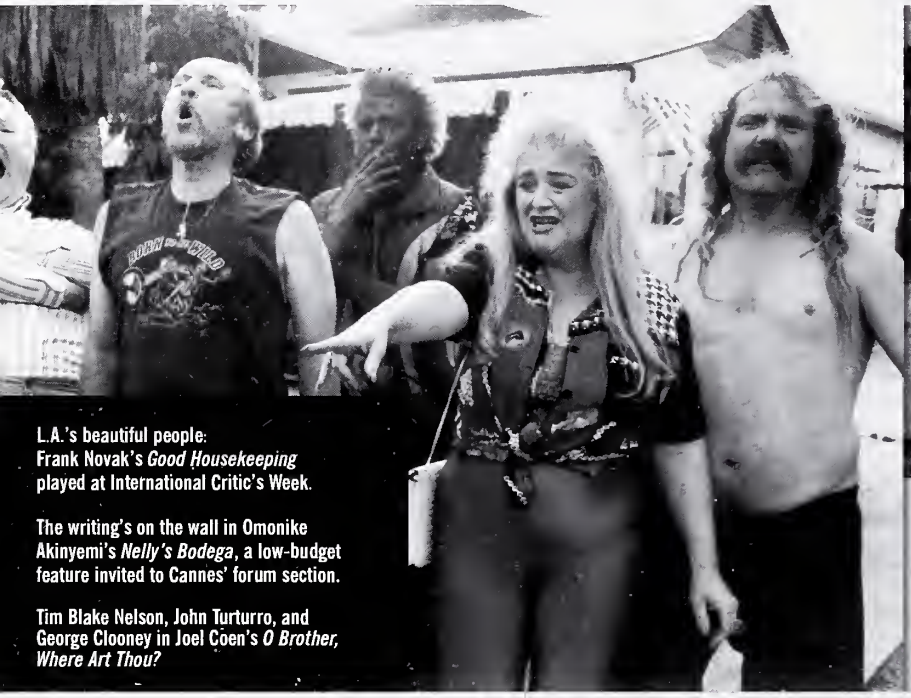
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Indies' Cannes-Do Spirit

How Low-Budget Directors Survive the Most Extravagant of Festivals

BY BARBARA SCHARRES





L.A.'s beautiful people: Frank Novak's *Good Housekeeping* played at International Critic's Week.

The writing's on the wall in Omonike Akinyemi's *Nelly's Bodega*, a low-budget feature invited to Cannes' forum section.

Tim Blake Nelson, John Turturro, and George Clooney in Joel Coen's *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

"IMAGE-MAKING IS VAMPIRISM," DECLARED director E. Elias Merhige to a crowd of aspiring filmmakers and habitues of the American Pavilion packed into the *Variety* tent for the annual IFP American Directors press conference at the 53rd Cannes International Film Festival. Merhige, whose second feature *Shadow of the Vampire* had its world premiere in the festival's Directors' Fortnight section, would understandably lace his remarks with vampire references, but vampirism is not a bad metaphor for cinema at Cannes, where pitching, promoting, buying, and selling all have a uniquely predatory quality. Thousands feed on the lifeblood of this big, seductive, pulsing festival each May and leave it sucked dry two weeks later. Sprawling and legendarily expensive, how worthwhile is it for the low-budget or no-budget American filmmaker to consider Cannes as an opportunity—with or without an invitation? Very worthwhile, according to some of this year's participants. What they learned comprises a useful guide for anyone thinking of the jaunt next year.

Some American critics were in a militant mood over the alleged lack of American films at Cannes, but this persistent buzz was mystifying considering that it was quite a good year for a certain kind of American film—the medium-sized independent featuring name stars and mainstream distribution. While there were no mega-bucks studio productions, five of the 24 films in competition were American: *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* by the Coen brothers, *Nurse Betty* by Neil Labute (which won the only prize to an American film, Best Screenplay), *The Golden Bowl* by James Ivory, *Fast Food, Fast Women* by Amos Kollek, and *The Yards* by James Gray. Another five American films, including Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream*, John Waters' *Cecil B. DeMented*, and Barbara Kopple's *A Conversation with Gregory Peck*, were showcased out of competition. Griffin Dunne's *Famous* screened in A Certain Regard, while Karyn Kusama's *Girlfight* and Lisa Robinson's short *Head Stand* were among the American films in the Directors' Fortnight. Frank Novak, with his first feature *Good Housekeeping*, was the sole American standard bearer in the International Critics' Week, which presents only seven carefully selected features and an equal number of shorts.

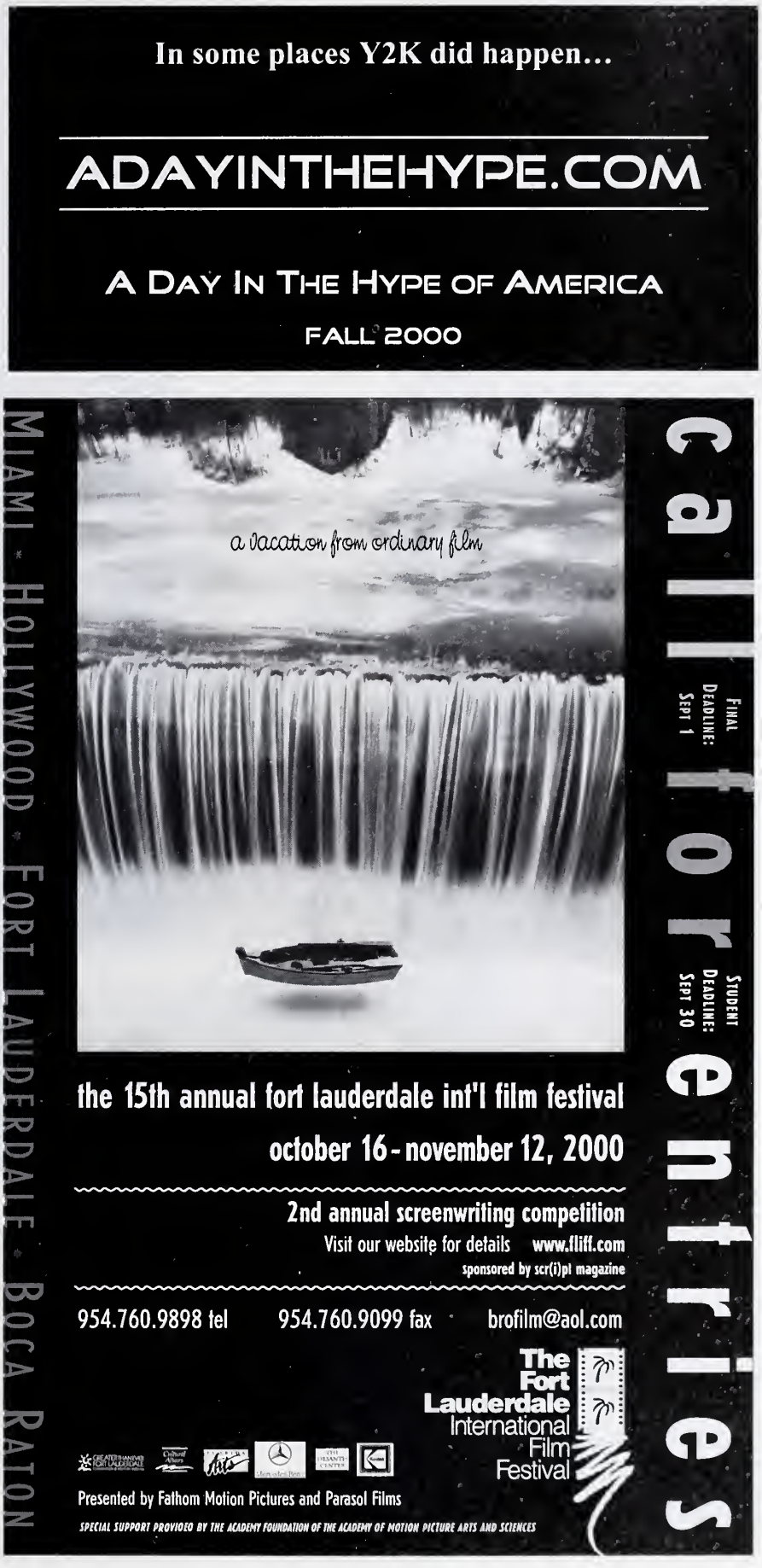
Good Housekeeping is a manic comedy on the break-up of a marriage between a forklift driver and her unemployed husband in white trash L.A. The film features some of the most hilariously profane dialogue since Eagle Pennell's regional comic rampage *Last Night at the Alamo*. Novak's men are hard-drinking hillbilly losers who have a passion for swapping collectible action figures. His heroine is a hardened babe who nonetheless keeps her bed piled with stuffed animals. Previous outings for *Good Housekeeping* were limited to screening in Slamdance, where it won the Grand Jury Prize, and an American Cinematheque screening at the Egyptian Theater in L.A., where it was seen by Critics' Week west coast scout Jean Darrigol. Darrigol immediately referred the film to the selection committee for Critics' Week, which is composed of seven members of the Union of French Film Critics. According to com-

mittee member Claire Clouzot, they were "200 percent behind *Good Housekeeping*," although they initially viewed it without subtitles. It became one of the two first selections for this year's line-up.

Novak, a self-taught part-time filmmaker and full-time furniture manufacturer, quickly discovered that there is a good news/bad news aspect to being accepted in any of the official sections at Cannes. Following the good news of the acceptance, which came about six weeks before the festival opened, he realized that showcasing his completely self-financed film there would require a significant additional investment. He estimates that he spent $50,000 to blow up the 16mm film to 35mm, shoot new credits, and do a new sound mix. In addition, he was required to provide the festival with two 35mm prints, both sub-titled in French. Novak says, "If I compare the experience of Cannes to Slamdance, it's everything times one hundred. Critics' Week demanded a lot more resources. For example, they requested two thousand press kits. I think I made fifty for Slamdance." He also cites the cost of overseas shipping of prints and press materials, as well as the expense of actually being in Cannes during the festival.

Although Novak could not afford to subsidize their attendance, six crew and seven cast members joined him in Cannes at their own expense. He describes the experience as "a little bit of a Cinderella story for some of the talent," not all of whom are full-time actors. His leading man, Bob Mills, is the service manager at a Ford dealership, and Christina Sidrow, playing a small supporting role as a cop, is actually a cop, who headed for the nearest Cannes police station to trade shoulder patches with the local gendarmes. Only a week before the festival Novak also hooked up with Menemsha sales agent Neil Friedman, who was already attending Cannes with two other films, including Dunne's *Famous*. "I'm so new to this business I didn't know that it's a good idea to have a sales agent," says Novak.

"Cannes has raised my profile as a filmmaker. People are taking me more seriously, asking me what I'm doing next and whether I need money," he continues, acknowledging that exposure in Cannes has also changed the prospects for *Good Housekeeping*. "After Slamdance I had



maybe twenty companies call me and ask to see a tape . . . There are some companies I won't name who asked for a tape and then sent it back. After I got in Cannes they wanted to see it again." While he received no viable offers following Slamdance, he met with success in selling the film at Cannes. On May 19, the trade papers reported that *Good Housekeeping* was acquired for U.S. distribution by the Shooting Gallery for six figures and will be released through the company's output deal with Universal. Two days later Novak reported to *The Independent* that the film had been sold to Ocean Films for French distribution.

The International Critics' Week, a 39-year-old sidebar section of the festival, has long been friendly to low-budget features. Critic's Week invites only first or second films and takes pride in having launched American independents such as *The Daytrippers*, which had been overlooked by other festivals. Claire Clouzot, who personally shepherded *Good Housekeeping* through its Cannes exposure and introduced Novak and his cast and crew at the shows, says, "I am a great pusher for indèpendent American films because I love them." Although other sections of the Cannes festival have repeatedly been criticized in recent years for expending little effort making real American discoveries, Clouzot explains that Critics' Week has two year-round consultants scouting American films for them: Joyce Pierpoline on the east coast, and Jean Darrigol on the west coast. A total of over 400 features and over 500 shorts were viewed for this year's selection.

Asked to provide some guidance for filmmakers for 2001, Clouzot recommends, "Submit your film now. Get in touch with Critics' Week by email, even if you only have a rough cut." She stresses that they are eager to know of work in progress if it is scheduled for completion by next year's festival. Beginning in 2001, Critics' Week expects to have digital video projection capacity at the festival, which Clouzot anticipates will expand their programming search considerably.

AN INEXPENSIVE LITTLE FLYER IN EXCEPTIONally fine print heralded three days of Slamdance shows at Cannes in a screening room in the Gray d'Albion Hotel, one of several "On the Road" events undertaken by Slamdance. A number of miscalculations, however, resulted in the screenings having a very low profile. Margot Gerber, publicist for both Slamdance and *Good Housekeeping*, outlined the ways in which they learned how to improve the situation next year at Cannes, where the daunting size and seemingly unlimited scope of the competing screenings and activities is perhaps the biggest surprise to a newcomer more familiar with the scale of Park City.

Learning to negotiate the festival on behalf of *Good Housekeeping*, Gerber requested advance publicity advice from Darrigol in L.A. and then obtained press contact information from the Critics' Week publicist. Special advance concerns included making all materials bilingual and keeping them light to lower shipping expense. Recognizing that Cannes is difficult for a small film with no budget for advertising or spectacle, she quickly decided that it was best to work through the system in promoting the film rather than taking a grassroots approach. Exuding plucky enthusiasm, she declares, "I'm the queen of working on a low budget."

Gerber continues, "I spent the first couple days just figuring out the system." This included getting free listings in the official festival directories, finding the offices for the trade papers, locating the press mail boxes, and asking American journalists for guidance. Even so, there were glitches, like when the shipment of the modest little promotional toys that Novak had made to give to key press didn't arrive until the last day of the festival. Gerber discarded plans to have cast members hand out flyers for *Good Housekeeping* on the street, but still thinks the idea of some kind of no-cost street promotion would be workable at Cannes. She would definitely contact U.S. press in advance of the festival in the future.

In the wake of the Slamdance screenings, which were undertaken to give Cannes exposure to features screened at Slamdance 2000 and 1999, including *Three Days* by Carter B. Smith and Kevon Ford, *Blink of an Eye* by Van Fischer, and a number of short films, Gerber says, "In the future it would be advantageous to be an official part of the market." Citing the automatically greater visibility of any market screenings to all press and buyers at the festival, she acknowledges that running your own shows off the beaten track has disadvantages. In promoting Slamdance, Gerber

10 Things a No-budget Filmmaker Should Pack for Cannes

1. A fake mobile phone
Mary Corliss, MoMA & *Film Comment*

2. A poster for the unmade film
Jeffrey Ressner, *Time* Magazine

3. A highjacked party list stolen from a website
John Peterson, Slamdunk

4. A sense of humor
Frank Novak, director, *Good Housekeeping*

5. 2000 press kits (next year 4000)
Claire Clouzot, Selection Committee, Cannes International Critics' Week

6. A great pitch that requires nine seconds or less
Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times, Roger Ebert & The Movies*

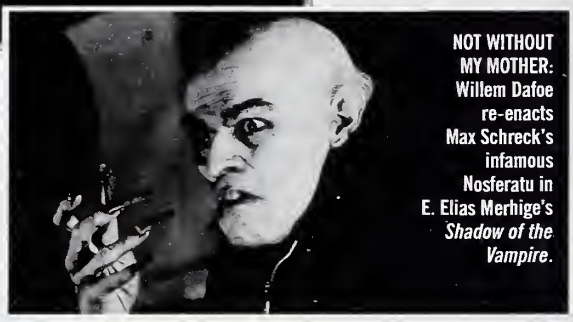
7. Luck
Pierre Rissient, Producer, Pathé

8. A plan for networking
Edith Grant, U.S. Rep, Cannes Market

9. His mother's credit card
Lisa Schwarzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly*

10. His mother
Renée Merhige, mother of director E. Elias Merhige, *Shadow of the Vampire*

— B.S.



NOT WITHOUT MY MOTHER: Willem Dafoe re-enacts Max Schreck's infamous Nosferatu in E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire*.

says, "We didn't know that we could stuff press boxes ourselves." In an attempt to double up on publicity efforts, the Slamdance team had included their flyer in *Good Housekeeping* press kits distributed to all international press. This potentially beneficial two-for-one idea backfired since, according to festival procedure, the press kits were only distributed on May 16, the day before *Good Housekeeping*'s first official screening, but the day after Slamdance's final screening.

EVEN FURTHER DOWN THE BUDGET SCALE AT Cannes was New York filmmaker Omonike Akinyemi, whose 50-minute film *Nelly's Bodega* was invited to participate in the Cannes Forum. The Forum is the festival's community outreach program, and screenings are made available to the residents of Cannes and those of outlying towns. Films for the Forum are selected from the official sections of the festival, but a small number of additional films, with an emphasis on young directors from around the world, are also included. *Nelly's Bodega* was one of the additional selections, and Akinyemi reports that unknown to her, her film was seen by a Forum scout at the Festival de Femmes et Cinema in Guadalupe, West Indies.

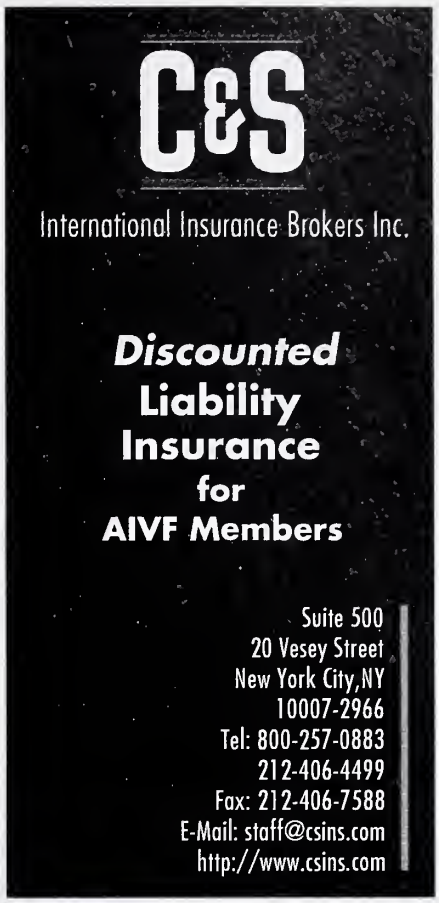
After being informed that her film had been selected for the Cannes Forum and told that she would receive free accommodations for her stay, Akinyemi, who has been living in Paris since February, set about planning how best to take advantage of her time at the festival. *Nelly's Bodega*, a film about a Cuban American woman trying to escape an abusive marriage, initially cost $25,000 to produce in super 16, and she later matched that amount to complete it. Akinyemi was required to provide a 35mm French subtitled print to the Forum, along with press materials.

In the two months prior to arriving at Cannes, Akinyemi consulted with a friend who had been to the festival, who advised her to make a list of the things she hoped to accomplish. Both distribution for *Nelly's Bodega* and financing for a future feature topped her list. Subsequently, she laid the ground work by making cold calls to numerous acquisitions people at companies including HBO, Warner Bros., and Good Machine before they left the U.S. and prepared her press kit and her treatment for a fiction feature titled *How to Stay Sane in Paris*. Once at Cannes, she was happily surprised by the value of market resources. She says, "If you're prepared, you can really make use of the market by presenting your work to distributors here and people who are looking for co-production possibilities, as well as looking into European funds and Asian production companies looking for interesting work. I found the market to be the most important aspect of the festival."

Although Akinyemi found that having a 50-minute film proved a liability in finding distribution, she succeeded in arranging four acquisitions meetings at Cannes, including with European television channels Canal+ and Arte. Of greater value to her were the contacts made for the future, and she continued to fearlessly make cold calls. "I just go up to a market stand and start talking about my work and what I hope to do," she says, "That's really my idea of a market—just like people selling bread and cheese." It's difficult here for a young filmmaker," she continues, "but if you are prepared with bio, treatment, and CV, it can be very profitable and very advantageous. A lot of my stay has been about getting cards and storing them for the future."

Akinyemi was aware of many resources available to the young American independent at Cannes, although she chose not to take advantage of all of them. She's a member of IFP and had participated in their Involve mentoring program for minority women. She attended IFP's American Directors press conference and their Meet the Distributors panel in the course of the festival, but eschewed their other support systems in favor of charting her own course through the market. Her persistence paid off in far-flung contacts and a nibble by a Japanese co-producer. About the range of possibilities available, she says, "I find that to be an exciting element of Cannes, as opposed to our domestic festivals where there isn't as much international representation." Akinyemi's advice to others: "It's really important that young filmmakers come here to make use of all this."

Barbara Scharres [bscharres@artic.edu] is director of the Gene Siskel Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.





EAST BY WEST COAST

The Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival Looks to the Future

BY ROBERT ITO



From Lee Myung-Se's stylish Korean thriller *Nowhere to Hide*.
(Inset): Julie Cho's festival favorite *Bubblehead* deals with a wayward kindergarten kid.

DESPITE RECENT PROMISES BY THE BIG Three networks to inject some color into their fall lineups, Hollywood still remains a programming wasteland for most minority groups. At the 18th Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival (May 18-25), a showcase for Asian and Asian American filmmakers presented by Visual Communications, the issue of media representation was a hot topic. A seminar entitled "Ching Chong Chinamen, No Mo!," for example, called for better TV and movie roles for Asian American actors, while festival executive producer Linda Mabalot's oft-repeated battle cry "We're here, and we've got product" reflected the general hope that at least a few of the 80 films in this year's festival might get picked up by local studio reps.

But for many attendees, the lack of Asian American representation in Hollywood has been the status quo for so long it's become almost a non-issue. "Forget Mr. TV or Movie Executive," said longtime festival co-director Abe Ferrer. "Let's instead create new places for our works to be shown."

Much of the festival was geared towards this ideal, from the booths of startup Asian American dot-coms crowding the DGA lobby to the seminars on digital media-making and streaming video. At a well-attended seminar on indie film distribution, Laemmle Theatres bookings manager Gregory Gardner discussed the ins and outs of the arthouse circuit (amidst boasts that he could "look at a poster and tell you how much money [the movie] will make"), while Stew Lyon, of the recently defunct Digital Entertainment Network, talked about the future of shorts on the World Wide Web. LA-based indie director and distributor Quentin Lee turned the most heads with his novel suggestion for raising funds: charge film fests to show your work—say, $1,000 for an opening night screening. Ben Kim, executive director of the Chicago Asian American Showcase, criticized the plan. "Uh, we're nonprofit," he said. "I'm not sure how many indie festivals would go for that."

Nonprofit status aside, Asian American film festivals probably won't be paying for product any time soon, given the exploding pool of talented filmmakers willing to exhibit their films for free. And while some filmmakers spoke off the record about past years when the lack of quality entries forced VC staffers to be less discriminating, those days are long gone. Now in its fifteenth year, the VC festival attracts the top talent in the Asian and Asian American filmmaking community, along with a number of entries fresh from Sundance and other top festivals.

This year's Golden Reel award, the festival's top prize, went to director Erika Surat Andersen's *Turbans*, a powerful and compelling film about an East Indian family's struggles to adapt to life in a small Oregon lumber town in 1918. After the family's two young sons are bullied and called "ragheads" because of their turbans, the parents must choose between abandoning this crucial part of their Sikh culture or subjecting their children to continued abuse from their classmates. Based on a true story written by the director's grandmother, *Turbans* transcends its deceptively simple set-up to deliver a moving, complex examination about the tough choices made for the sake of cultural and religious assimilation.

Conscience and the Constitution, an emotionally charged documentary about Japanese American draft resisters during World War II, scored the festival's audience award for best feature. After refusing to be drafted out of U.S. internment camps

until their constitutional rights were restored, the resisters spent years in federal penitentiaries—followed by decades of ostracism from members of their own Japanese American community. Director Frank Abe's crew included *Eyes on the Prize II* editor Lillian Benson, who helped weave the admittedly complex, multifaceted story into a cohesive narrative, as well as some of the top Asian American voice talents in the business.

Abe gave the film a sense of urgency by incorporating recent events into the film—most notably, the ongoing discussion on whether the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the community's leading civil rights organization, should make a formal apology to the resisters for its past actions against them. Anti-JACL sentiment ran high in the packed house: when resistance leader Frank Emi described a pro-JACL war hero as an "asshole" in the film, the crowd erupted in laughter. In addition to raising consciousness about a long-forgotten part of history, Abe's powerfully persuasive film—due to air on public television early next year—will probably have a major impact on the Japanese American community's current debate over this hot-button issue.

Two of the festival's most talked about international features were *Citizen Hong Kong*, director Ruby Yang's clever and insightful doc about five young people adapting to life in Hong Kong after the British handover of 1997, and *Nowhere to Hide*, a quirky, adrenaline rush of a detective thriller from South Korea that combined elements of John Woo's balletic violence with the rainy, shadowy look of the best noir classics (the cinematography and feel of the piece is so gorgeous, in fact, you'll hardly notice that the film has no real story). *There's a Strong Wind in Beijing* also impressed audiences with its ultra low budget feel (the creators used eight-year-old film stock and a Lavalier mic taped onto a broom handle) and guerrilla filmmaking tactics. The three creators approached strangers in Beijing and asked them the seemingly innocuous question, "Do you think Beijing's wind is strong?" The answers—delivered in public restrooms, grade school classrooms, anywhere the filmmakers felt like entering—revealed much about the character of the city.

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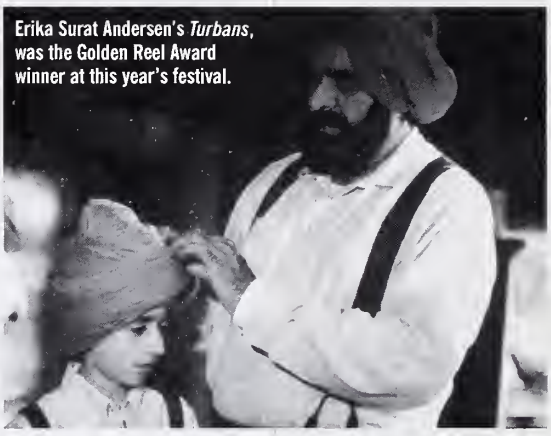
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But despite the strength of the international films, it was the homegrown fare that grabbed the most attention. Daniel Yoon's *Post Concussion* charmed audiences with its wry take on life after a major head trauma. Yoon, who served as the feature's producer, writer, editor, cinematographer and star, was also the film's best promoter, approaching attendees in the ticket line and box office line to personally invite them to see his film. Director Deann Borshay's *First Person Plural*, fresh off the Sundance circuit, also played to a wildly receptive audience. Following the screening, the Korean American filmmaker praised the predominantly Asian American audience for "getting" many of the film's more subtle ironies. "At Sundance," she said, "nobody laughed at the part where my (white adoptive) father said I 'looked kind of yellow' when I got jaundice."


Erika Surat Andersen's *Turbans*, was the Golden Reel Award winner at this year's festival.

The festival's program of student shorts was also one of the best in years. Often one of the more uneven elements of the fest, this year's collection, entitled "Shorts for Bubbleheads," displayed the growing talent and sophistication of the up-and-coming pool of young Asian American filmmakers. The highlight of the program was *Bubblehead*, Julie Cho's UCLA film school thesis project about a six-year-old boy who is chronically late for kindergarten. Cho ignored the standard warnings about kids and film to create a wonderfully creative and unsentimental look at childhood, where the smallest slights and kindnesses are magnified tenfold and the passage of time follows its own quirky laws. The clever story, lyrical dream sequences, and strong performances by the cast—most notably Brandon Wang as the boy and Connie Ventress as the comically anal-retentive teacher—made this one of the surprise hits of the festival.

Like so many other millennial celebrations, this year's showcase also became a time to honor past accomplishments. To celebrate VC's 30th anniversary, organizers screened five classic documentaries from the past three decades—*When You're Smiling: The Deadly Legacy of Internment*, by Janice Tanaka (1999); *You Can Still Hear Me Singing*" by Antonio DeCastro and Linda Mabalot (1989); *Shimon*, by Kaz Takeuchi (1990); *I Told You So*, by Alan Kondo (1974); and *Yuki Shimoda: Asian American Actor*, by John Esaki (1985). All, for the most part, are socially conscious films that reflected the ideals of community empowerment embraced by the first wave of Asian American filmmakers.

But where does VC go from here? Many filmmakers see the festival at a crossroads between the idealism and identity politics of the past and the more pragmatic attitudes of the upcoming generation of young Asian American filmmakers. "Is all that identity stuff irrelevant now?" asked indie videomaker and AIVF board member Valerie Soe, before launching into a defense of socially conscious filmmaking. Lawrence "Kip" Fulbeck, whose cutting-edge video explorations of topics like Asian male sexuality and Hapa culture have made him a festival favorite, believes that films can still convey a social message—without hitting you over the head with it. "There's nothing wrong with that old school stuff," he says, "but you can't keep doing that 'this is a stereotype, isn't it bad' kind of film." Abe Ferrer eyes the future with cautious optimism, hopeful that the festival will continue to offer an alternative to the limited crop of Asian product currently in vogue with mainstream audiences. "This infatuation with Hong Kong film and Wong Kar-wai and Jackie Chan just keeps people from seeing a lot of other cinema that's a lot more deserving," says Ferrer, now in his fourteenth year with the festival. "To me, all that stuff has seen its day."

Robert Ito is a freelance writer and associate editor at Los Angeles Magazine.

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Land of Hope and Money

Is the Grass Really Greener in the UK?

BY HOLLY HUDSON GROVES



London-based Greta Schiller, producer of *Escape to Life*, with the film's DP, Uli Fischer.



Erika and Klaus Mann in an archival photo from *Escape to Life*, written/directed by Andrea Weiss and Wieland Speck.

(below) From Gary Holding's *Blood*, a feature financed through British public funds.

WHEN I MOVED TO LONDON LAST FALL, IT was with wide-eyed optimism. Like many American filmmakers, I'd always considered the UK a land of plentiful arts funding. Having been to festivals in England, I'd noticed the impressive level of production values that seemed to be a matter of course for British cinema. Did that mean there was a pot of gold at the end of this rainbow? What do British producers think about their funding opportunities? How does this affect their work and attitude? In asking these questions, I found that there is indeed a different climate in England. But most curiously, I also discovered that things are moving along in a direction that's leading towards an U.S. entrepreneurial model.

As it happens, major changes are afoot, particularly for feature filmmaking. Up until this year, the main sources of public funding have been the British Film Institute (BFI), the British Film Commission, British Screen Finance, and the Lottery, run by the Arts Council of England. Recently the government announced the launch of one central funding organization, the Film Council, which will have approximately £50 million a year ($75 million) available for commercial features, with £5 million ($7.5 million) earmarked for emerging filmmakers and £5 million for development. (This compares with $4.75 million in the Media Arts division of the National Endowment for the Arts.) While the overall amount of funding will remain the same after the restructuring, this new umbrella body will incorporate the grant giving of each organization into the Film Council.

The atmosphere among producers seems hopeful, yet there are apprehensions. Kate Ogborn, executive director of the BFI's New Director's Fund, says the birth of the Film Council is the government's attempt to simplify film funding and track its spending. "I suppose peoples' nervousness is with the power resting all in one place. 'Who's making the decisions? Will there really be diversity?'—all those usual anxieties about a large amount of money coming out of one organization."

There is widespread support, however, for the Film Council's new film development fund, which will be the biggest in Europe. Since the Arts Council never previously allotted money for development, this is heralded as a promising step. In the past, funding officials have been mystified by the American independent who came over seeking funding for a British-based project they had been nurturing for years. In their eyes, it made the project seem suspect when it couldn't get off the ground quickly. According to Tina McFarling of the Film Council, they realize now that was the nature of the beast and that the "[American] independent understood the necessity of a longer development period." McFarling hopes the development fund will put to rest their history of producing commercial flops and give rise to more successes like *The Full Monty* and *Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels*, which were funded entirely by private investors.

"It seems like there's a vast amount of money here, but the competition is fierce. All the programs are oversubscribed to the max."

—English-based producer Gary Holding

In addition to the Film Council funds, there will still be grants available through regional arts boards and media development agencies. The Yorkshire Media Production Agency, for instance, receives approximately £800,000 ($1.2 million) from European Regional Development Funds for Yorkshire area projects. The

recipients of YMPA funds are required to spend twice the amount received on the production and must create jobs in the area.

According to McFarling, the overall agenda now is to "look towards developing and growing the industry." And growing the film industry means that short films also get their share of support. Short fiction work is still very popular and seen as a viable stepping-stone to features. A typical budget for a 10-minute short funded by the BFI's New Director's Fund is around £60,000 ($95,400). While nearly incomprehensible to the average American indie, Ogborn says the sky-high budgets are because "peoples' expectations of shorts have gone up. They expect a level of production value, because they're looking to see whether they're going to risk the money on someone for a feature."

This all sounds very nice. But ask if the grass is greener in the UK, and you might well be surprised. "Everybody here thinks it's better in Germany, France, and everywhere else," says McFarling.

"It seems like there's a vast amount of money here, but the competition is fierce," says Gary Holding, a Scottish-born, New Jersey-bred producer who now lives in England. "All the programs are oversubscribed to the max." Nonetheless, his company, Disruptive Element, produced a feature, *Blood*, as well as several documentaries and shorts over the past four years, all with public money. Holding's latest BFI short clocked in at approximately £98,000 ($155,800), with funding also coming from Channel 4 and the Yorkshire Media Arts Council.

But in Holding's view, there's something to be said for the more guerrilla approach to filmmaking seen in the United States and a danger to a reliance on public funding. "It's a bit like what happened in Germany—what did all this public money do to the German film industry? It flattened it." He is currently developing a feature with Loud Mouse Productions based on the book *Canteen Culture*, an exposé about life at the Metropolitan Police Force, and hopes to fund it privately.

And he's not the only one who's moving in this direction. The BFI's Kate Ogborn thinks that the map is shifting with the recent successes of the privately funded pictures. "There is more of an entrepreneurial spirit flourishing. It's much more of an American model of setting it up with entirely private investors [and] people are more willing to give first-timers a try."



U.S. expatriate producer David Shulman (center) with presenter Kate Humble (left) and ethnobiologist Anna Lewington. Their BBC series *Rough Science* included a program that charted the progress of a group of experts who were dropped on the Mediterranean island of Capraia and then had to determine their latitude and longitude without the aid of compasses, phones, or any modern conveniences.

MORE THAN FEATURE DIRECTORS, IT'S DOCumentary filmmakers who historically have looked across the ocean with envy at England's funding apparatus, which includes the mighty BBC and Channel 4. The relative ease of getting documentary work is one thing that convinced New York producer David Shulman to transplant himself permanently to England after he finished up his Fulbright Production Fellowship there. Although he was getting funded for his projects in the United States, Shulman experienced the familiar scenario of not being picked up by PBS because he was an unknown.

Since planting his flag in the UK four years ago, Shulman has produced and directed several documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4. He appreciates the chance to work within a structure, as opposed to the isolation he often felt carrying the torch for a project back home. He has found possibilities here he couldn't have envisioned in the US, such as recently being asked to executive produce a series for Discovery Europe about environmental activism in Holland. He says that "depending on your motivation, work here might bring many more opportunities or it might be extremely frustrating as well."

One of the biggest differences lies in producers' willingness to drop a project idea if the major funders aren't interested. "The phenomenon of producing something on speculation virtually doesn't exist here," Shulman observes—a sentiment echoed by another expatriate, Greta Schiller, a New Yorker and documentary filmmaker who has been living in London for the past 10 years. "In England, if you don't come up with an idea that fits into a broadcaster's mandate—if you're working in low-budget fiction or documentary—then basically you just drop it," she says. "Whereas in the States, people will still sell their first-born."

As Shulman notes, "Almost everything is made with the knowledge of where it will end up. Whereas in the States, you aren't motivated by what the demographic is for the given PBS slot, because you probably won't get a slot on PBS." In spite of that, American producers forge ahead, he says. "In the States, you could have a never-say-die attitude, because you could always keep going as long as there's some hope and you get some seed money. Here it's a bit more all or nothing."

And while it's nice to get a commission that includes the total budget, there's a downside to making a documentary for the BBC or Channel 4. Says Shulman, "Here things are made for TV; you could sweat blood and tears, [but then] it goes out and that's it! There isn't the same kind of [educational] market or culture for post-trans-

mission distribution."

The Film Council also funds nonfiction projects, but, as with feature films, producers who utilize this funding source are expected to do a bit of fundraising on their own. Typically, a project financed through any of the three traditional bodies must come up with a percentage of its funding from outside sources. Schiller's latest film, a docu-drama entitled *Escape to Life*, received 50% of its funding from the Lottery and the rest from the Hamburg Film Fund and presales to Finnish TV and Arté. She says that while American indies tend to think it's easier here, the misconceptions cut both ways. "The British still hold the illusion that you can make a lot of money from documentaries in the States."

FOR AMERICAN INDIES CONSIDERING migrating across the pond, Ogborn suggests they "would want to focus on finding out who's working with whom in the UK. I think they'd be surprised by how much traffic across the Atlantic there is both ways." However, Schiller laments the earlier days in Britain when "it was a really vibrant film scene. That's kind of shifted into a much more pseudo attempt to do English-version Hollywood-type productions."

So is it easier here? The consensus seems to be not necessarily, it's just a different ball game. "For me," says Ogborn, "there is a myth around the can-do culture in America. Maybe it's an assumption that that's an easier route than the tortuous bureaucratic routes that people encounter in the UK."

It is in classic English style that change moves at a snail's pace, if it moves at all. But as America's influence continues to spread, there will no doubt be a growth in the number of intrepid filmmakers like Jan Dunn, a director who, after fruitless attempts at fundraising, made her first 10-minute short for £3,000 of her own money. She and her writer fashioned a script based on two actors and one location. The result was *Mary's Date*, which screened at festivals worldwide. That is a method American indies would instantly recognize.

Holly Hudson-Groves [hudsongroves@yahoo.com]is a writer/producer from New York currently living in London.

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IN THE FINE PRINT

SAG's Distributor Assumption Agreement

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE ABOUT TO sign a distribution deal for your labor of love. But as you're preparing to cross the t's and dot the i's, you begin to recall all of those documents you signed awhile back that were submitted by one of the talent unions, probably the Screen Actors Guild (SAG). Somewhere in that morass of paperwork, there was a provision requiring you, the producer, to require your distributor or sales agent to sign a "Distributor's Assumption Agreement."

"Now, what was that exactly?" you wonder. Under the Distributor's Assumption Agreement, a film's distributor agrees in writing to assume the obligation to pay SAG members (and other professional performers) their residuals *as these monies are received by the distributor.*

You inform your potential distributor about the Distributor's Assumption Agreement he's required to sign. You gently point out that in the big leagues, these agreements are now commonplace. But upon hearing about this provision, your would-be distributor explains that he cannot sign for one of several reasons: His is a small company that lacks the accounting and administrative resources to keep track of residuals, social security, withholding, and other payments required by law, as well as sending the required statements and checks to SAG, without incurring an enormous expense which would be economically detrimental to the company. Or your distributor might maintain that the company is, in fact, a domestic or international sales agent, which actually "licenses" a project's rights to various markets and media and is not a "distributor" per se. Or he might observe that his company will sign Distributor's Assumption Agreements solely for projects that they produce and not for third party acquisitions.

Panicked, you go back to your SAG Business Agent and inform her about the situation. The SAG rep listens politely, then delivers the not-so-good news: SAG is a "secured creditor" in your project with a security interest or lien on your project's physical elements and rights. This means that, in order to ensure that its members and other professional performers are paid in a timely manner, SAG, in a worst-case scenario, has the right to enforce that lien and foreclose on your film and secure its rights. On a less drastic scale, SAG can compel you to go to arbitration, through which it could exercise its right to receive monetary damages or put an injunction against the film's release.

What can an independent producer do to deal with this dilemma? This situation is especially problematic since distributors often become involved in independent projects only after their completion. At an earlier stage, SAG would insist directly to the distributor or sales agent that they sign the agreement or else provide additional "financial assurances." The latter would include establishing a reserve fund for future residuals with SAG (or in escrow) or having SAG become a party to a collection agreement. The collection agreement would be between SAG, the producer, the distributor/sales agent, and any other secured creditors, such as banks, other talent unions, and lab facilities. It would state which party would be paid how much money and in what order.

How badly does the distributor want the film? If the answer is 'real bad,' the distributor is likely to sign the agreement.
—SAG's Vicki Shapiro

But if the distributor came into the picture later, chances are it's you, not SAG, who's going to have to convince them to sign. But what if they don't want to? The only leverage you have, according to Vicki Shapiro, SAG's Assistant Hollywood Executive Director for Legal Affairs, is found in the answer to this question: "How badly does the distributor want the film?" If the answer is "real bad," the distributor is likely to sign.

Shapiro notes that SAG recognizes the problem an independent producer faces when his or her project has been financed without any pre-sale agreements that would trigger the formation of a residual reserve. She acknowledges that SAG is more vigorously insisting that any distributor sign the Assumption Agreement.

"Reputable distributors are likely to sign the Distributor Assumption Agreement," Shapiro observes. (This requirement excludes "end users," such as television networks and cable channels, as well as sales agents who simply license a film's rights to third parties.) "Although, as a secured creditor, SAG has the right to foreclose on a project if its members aren't paid, it is in everyone's interest—the producer, the distributor, SAG, and the performers—to work out some arrangement so the project can be released and our members do get paid what is due to them," she assures. If a distributor absolutely balks, "the producer should go to SAG and explain why there is a problem meeting their obligation."

A similar dilemma occurs for producers who use SAG's "ultra low budget" agreements, such as its Limited Exhibition Agreement (LEA). If a film is more widely distributed than anticipated, they are compelled to pay the "bump up" monies to SAG members and other professional performers. Although this is generally a producer's responsibility, SAG and the producer realize that a film's distributor is the first one who sees any earned cash. Although the producer is obligated to pay for the bump-up, on some occasions, bump-up payments can be addressed in the Distributors Assumption Agreement.

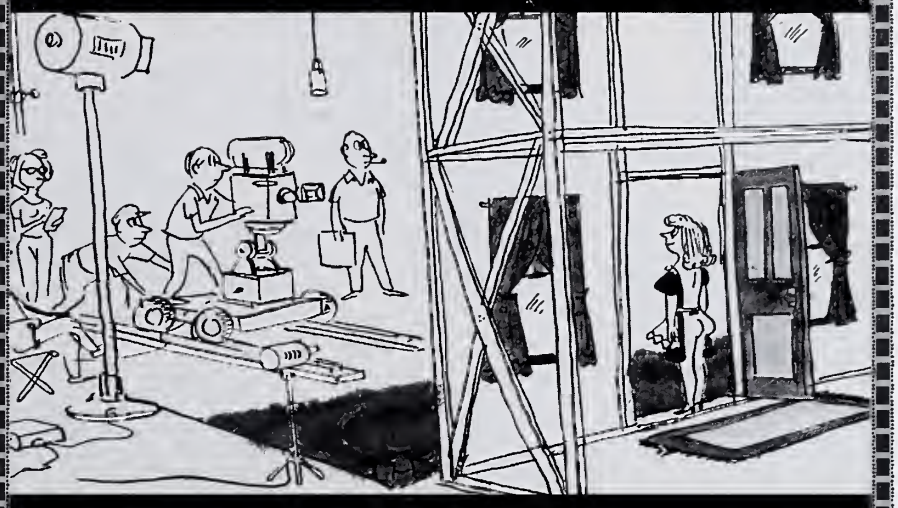
Distributors cannot avoid their obligations under the Distributor's Assumption Agreement by selling or transferring a project's rights to a third party. SAG must provide written approval concerning the financial responsibility of the party acquiring such rights, and the party must assume the distributor's obligations under the agreement. Otherwise, the original distributor remains liable under the Distributor's Assumption Agreement. When asked what is SAG's procedure for dealing with distributors and sales agents who will not sign the agreement, Shapiro observes that the project's producer still retains liability for SAG payments.

"Each case is unique," Shapiro notes. "We try to work out what's best for the performers and the producer, since it is in everybody's [professional and financial] interest for the film to be seen."

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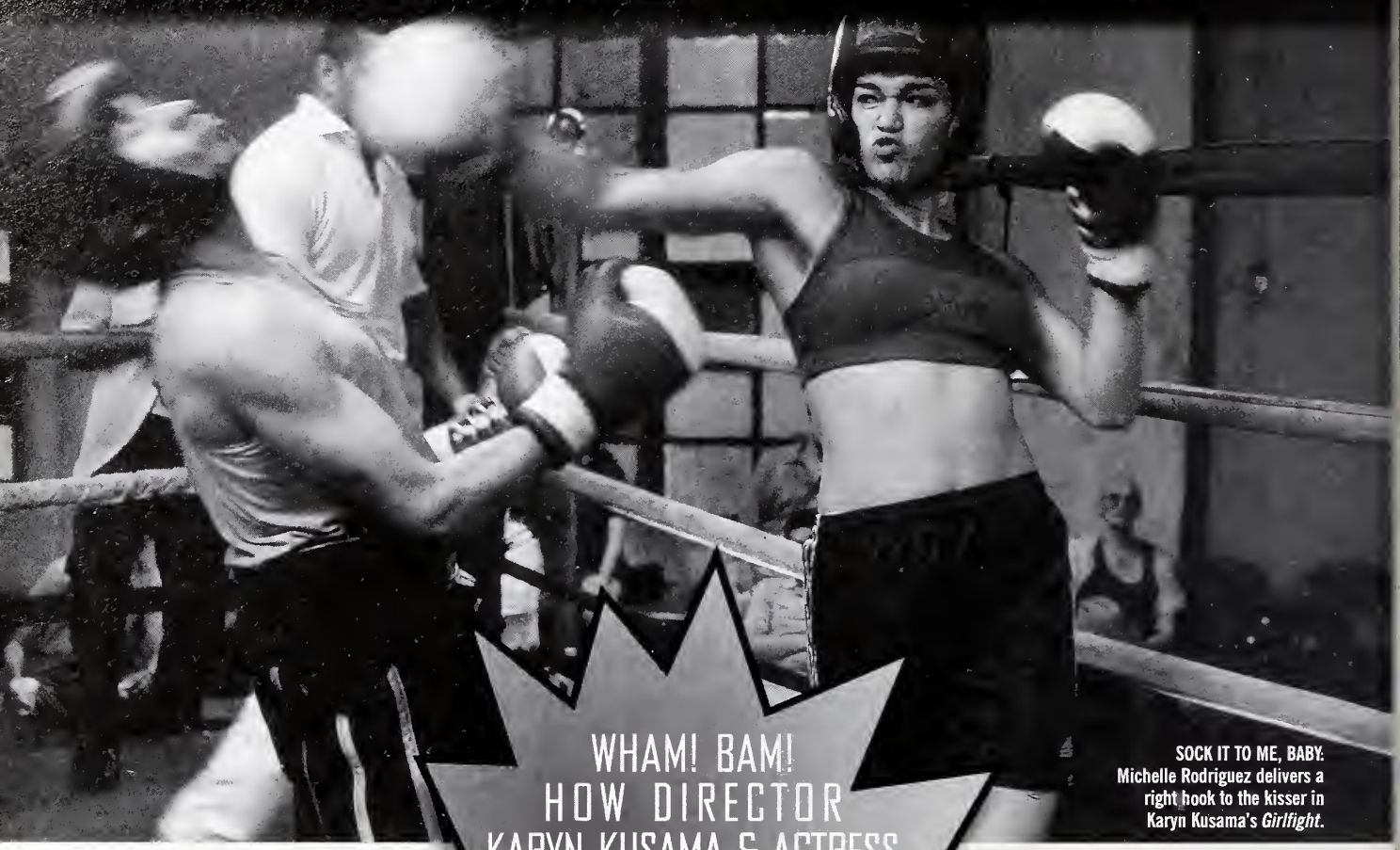
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KUSAMA'S KNOCKOUT

BY BETH PINSKER



SOCK IT TO ME, BABY: Michelle Rodriguez delivers a right hook to the kisser in Karyn Kusama's *Girlfight*.

WHAM! BAM! HOW DIRECTOR KARYN KUSAMA & ACTRESS MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ BROUGHT AUDIENCES TO THEIR FEET WITH THEIR DEBUT FEATURE, GIRLFIGHT

IN THE OPENING SHOT OF *Girlfight*, a teen slouches against her locker, dressed in fatigues, her hair pulled back so she looks even more severe, her frown deep enough that we can see the angry whites of her eyes. Then we see her perched on a window ledge in a girls' bathroom, seemingly oblivious to the popular girls prettifying themselves, until she suddenly inserts herself into a little verbal spat between two of the girls. The shouting spills over into the hallway, where scuffling ensues. The girls are not so much saying their lines as screeching. They are the stereotypes of high schools everywhere, doing what girls in high school movies do.

You think, 'what's this going to be?'

The acting is so raw, the camerawork so realistically gritty that it looks underdeveloped, the situation so mundane that it doesn't seem to sustain itself.

But then the tables start to turn, and *Girlfight* takes shape into a remarkable human drama that won both the Sundance Grand Jury Prize (shared with *You Can Count on Me*) and the director's award, was selected for the Directors Fortnight at Cannes, and will be released this fall by Sony Screen Gems with the hope of turning it into a modest mainstream hit.

What has happened is that by the time the film reaches its halfway point, the beginning shakiness reveals itself as part of the character development. The posturing, the immaturity, the over-arching reach of it all—it's just part of showing how this unruly teenager Diana, played by

PHOTO: JAMES BRIDGES, COURTESY SCREEN GEMS

newcomer Michelle Rodriguez, progresses from anger to control.

"The thing I like about Michelle," says first-time director Karyn Kusama, who found the 21-year-old Jersey City native at an open casting call, "is you can almost see how truly inexperienced she is, but you still feel that she belongs in the frame. She grows on you in terms of her performance, because anger and immaturity is an act most of the time in an adolescent. That posturing feels like posturing in the beginning."

The other important element that is shielded in the opening of *Girlfight* is that this is a sports movie, not a catty high school drama. Much of it is composed of boxing sequences—either training or actual fights—and it is Diana who is doing the fancy footwork.

Many sports movies have explored the theme that the discipline of training can save tough lives—look at *Rocky* or, heaven forbid, *The Karate Kid*. But save the Academy Award-nominated documentary *On the Ropes*, few have looked seriously at the way boxing has done this for women. Fewer still have ventured into the mind of an 18-year-old Latina in a housing project in Brooklyn. None at all have dealt with the emotion of men and women fighting as equals in this sport, and how this shifts relationships outside of the ring. *Girlfight* does all of these things, and with so little consciousness about breaking ground that it almost goes unnoticed as the movie unspools.

Kusama developed her story after living in Fort Greene, Brooklyn for eight years and observing what she calls "forgotten youth." She's half-Japanese, half Western European, and in no part Latina. She grew up in suburban St. Louis, with parents who both worked in child psychology, so this isn't a tale of her own experience. She is a 32-year-old new filmmaker who says she likes to cook, loves flowers, and is just as interested in and passionate about life outside of the film world as she is about her work. She is down-to-earth but not earthy; she is a film geek but participates in life out from behind the camera as well. What she did to create *Girlfight* was to combine a writer's curiosity about how to guide an audience's emotions with what she learned when she started to train as a boxer.

The result yielded the character of Diana, a tough-talking girl from a Red Hook project who doesn't know what to do with all of her energy. Her mother is long dead, her artistic younger brother is a smart kid who gets all the attention, her father is a macho lout. Diana is left to her own devices, except she doesn't have any devices. She's poor and largely ignored, and she's frustrated and volatile because she can't figure out how to get her chance. Then she finds boxing, and she finagles a way into taking her brother's lessons at the gym. In the rigors of training and the rules of the ring, she finally has a home for herself. She also finds a soul mate, Adrian, played by another newcomer, Santiago Douglas. Along with her newfound physical strength comes dignity and a way out of the anger.

"I saw a part of her in me," says Rodriguez. "That part that says, 'I'm not going to listen to what anyone's saying and I'm going to do what I think is the right thing for me." As if to prove her point, Rodriguez tells the story of how she came to be in the movie in the first place. She was moping around her house at 19, writing, not doing much of anything but a few days of extra work on films shooting locally. Her brother yelled at her to get a job, but she knew Burger King wasn't for her, so she went to one last audition before throwing in the towel.

"I just walked in there with a pessimistic attitude. How could somebody possibly figure out what you're capable of in ten minutes?" she asks.

That negativity, however, is the key to the character, and Rodriguez's internalization of the attitude was the key the movie. Because without any acting experience, without any physical training as a boxer, she was as much of a wildcard as Kusama was as an untested director.

"We went back and forth about casting her," the director says. "If she didn't work, the movie doesn't work. I'd ask all the prospects, 'How do you feel about getting hit in the face over and over again?' You can tell when people are game and when they're not. Most people in the end didn't want that, and understandably so. But there was this fearlessness and naiveté to Michelle. She thought this is what she had to do for the part. She went beyond the call of duty in terms of understanding the role. It paid off, and she ended up being the only person I could imagine playing the part."

NEEDLESS TO SAY, FINDING FINANCING FOR SUCH A PROJECT WAS not easy. Like most independent filmmakers, Kusama looked high and low for money while she polished her script. In the five years it took from first draft to her shooting date, she was able to pick her locations, design costumes, and storyboard the entire film. She had those endless meetings with people who were concerned about her being an untested entity. She met with people who talked about what stars they could cast in the film. She dropped her proposed budget from $2 million to $1.5 million and finally to $1 million. But in the end, her hardscrabble independent film financing story didn't turn out so conventionally.

One of Kusama's early forays into the film world was as John Sayles' assistant—a job she held for three years. When it came to crunch time for financing, Sayles personally put up half the money for *Girlfight*. The other half came from the Independent Film Channel (which coproduced Sayles' *Men with Guns*), but only after they had started shooting. So for a while, Sayles was on the line for the full $1 million.

"He asks that I tell everybody that he doesn't do this for everyone. He doesn't want people to call him and ask him for money," Kusama says.

"I'm at the point where I'm going to have to invest in my own next picture because I can't raise the money," Sayles deadpans. "I'm not in the business of reading scripts. I couldn't produce a two-car funeral. Send the scripts to Karyn."

Sayles, in fact, is a rare investor in a field where it is rare for a director to invest in somebody else's projects at all. He has only done this twice before. He put up some of the budget for Nancy Savoca's 1989 film, *True Love*. He also helped Mexican director Alejandro Springall finance his 1997 film, *Santitos* (they also traded subtitling services on *Men with Guns* and *Santitos*).

These investments aren't tax shelters or the product of a multi-millionaire's generosity. Sayles is not Steven Spielberg.

The 49-year-old independent film pioneer put up money for these projects with the hope of getting it back, and maybe, possibly, making a profit. He's not holding his breath, though, since he hasn't made his money back on some of his own films. He says he broke even after many years on *True Love*. He has yet to recoup his investment on *Santitos*. And he doesn't know what will happen in the end with *Girlfight*. He could end up with a return this time, but still that won't make him a millionaire.

"I'm not that dumb," he says. "I've made 12 movies, and I know how rarely they make their money back. But I'm not going to lose all my money. I have a good chance of making half of it back, or some of it at least. *Girlfight* is the first one I think I'll make a profit from.

"But that's not the real point," he continues. "You get something out and you want to put something back. I've been working in the movies for 20 years. I'm not the only person who's a storyteller. I know how hard it is to get started."

All Kusama can do is express her undying gratitude: "Had they not done that, we wouldn't be sitting here talking. Money is what gets movies made. It's not government grants, that's for sure."

SO WHAT IS IT ABOUT KUSAMA THAT CAUGHT SAYLES' EYE AND made him want to back up his support of her with a $1 million bond? "I could tell she had her shit together," he says.

Kusama went to New York University's film school where she directed a number of experimental shorts and documentaries. After graduating in 1990, she worked in the editing room on documentaries and held a series of odd jobs. The oddest: Wrapping $2,000 in change, mostly pennies, for a man who couldn't fathom doing it himself. Still, she says, doing this kind of work was preferable to working drudge jobs on films she hated while trying to work her way up. Instead, she was patient. Instead, she wrote. While she was babysitting for a family that is close to Sayles and his partner, Maggie Renzi, she met Martha Griffin, who was then Sayles' assistant. When Griffin moved on to producing duties outside of the Sayles fold, Kusama took over and helped Sayles through the end of *The Secret of Roan Inish*, all of *Lone Star*, and the beginning of *Men with Guns*. She worked mostly in the office and not out on location, so Sayles says they did not have a typical mentor relationship.

"I didn't feel like she was destined to be an office worker," Sayles says. Rather, they bonded by going to boxing matches in Atlantic City (a scene that is mirrored in the movie when Diana goes to see a fight with her boxing instructor).

Girlfight was not the first script Kusama tried to sell and not the first of hers that Sayles had read. Kusama actually went out first with another script, which Griffin says was a murder drama called *Take Me to the Water*, but didn't get anywhere shopping it. "It was too dark," Kusama says. "It *wasn't* too dark, but that's what people said about it. I decided to change gears and go with *Girlfight*, because it was more uplifting, even though in my mind it was a more difficult film practically."

Sayles says what was good about starting out with *Girlfight* is that it had commercial potential. That might seem strange coming from Sayles, who has had a damn-them-all attitude since he started in film in 1978, but he's also a realist who knows how to make the bottom line work.

"None of Karyn's other scripts would have been as commercial; they wouldn't have stood out the same way. That's a real problem for low-budget movies, but you *have* to stand out in order to get that first shot and get the experience," says Sayles. "If you get the opportunity to make the second one, you're going to stand out in other ways."

The decision to put up the money came a year or so into Kusama shopping the project with Griffin, Sarah Green, and Maggie Renzi attached as producers. To goose the process, Renzi went to Sayles to ask if they could put up the money. "I said yes," Sayles says. "That's the end of my activities as producer."

What particularly impressed him was the film's dialogue. "That's something that's not in a lot of films but that's really important and something I'm really sensitive to. It would have been hard for me to invest in something where the dialogue wasn't good." He also says, "It's a movie about people, not about movies. Karyn understands movies and how they work, but this is not something that makes you think only of other movies."



GO GET HIM: Santiago Douglas and Michelle Rodriguez.

Below: director Karyn Kusama.

And then there was Rodriguez, who knocked him out—not literally, of course. "She's got an enormous amount of charisma and honest talent," he says. "And she [became] a real boxer. The first tape I saw of her was in the gym. The volatility is there. A lot of the movie is about her getting control, really getting what she wants, and she's got the intensity and the eye to play the part."

While Sayles wasn't

PHOTOS: JAMES BRIDGES, THERESA DILLON, COURTESY SCREEN GEMS

the Independent
FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

2000 READER SURVEY: Editorial & Advertising

Talk to us! Your feedback is important. With this survey, you can help provide the kind of information that guides what kind of articles and ads go into this magazine—*your* magazine.

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All responses received by the deadline will be entered in a drawing, which will be awarded to 10 entries on October 2 and announced on www.aivf.org

Thank you! Please return survey by September 30.

I. ABOUT YOU

1) Are you a current member of AIVF? __Yes __No

2) Did you complete our membership survey mailed in June 2000? __Yes __No
(*If yes, please indulge us and fill out this entire form, including any redundant questions, so that we can better understand your work as mediamakers and your reading patterns.*)

3) What region do live in?

__New York Metro area __South __Pacific Northwest
__East Coast __Southwest __West Coast
__Midwest __Mountain States __Foreign (country):_____

4) What is your zip code? _____

5) Age: __under 20 __31-35 __46-50 __over 60
__20-25 __36-40 __51-55
__26-30 __41-45 __56-60

6) Gender: __female __male

7) Do you identify yourself as gay or lesbian? __yes __no __bisexual

8) Ethnicity: __African American __Caucasian __other (specify):_____
__Asian American __Latino(a)

9) Annual Income: __under $10K __$30K-40K __$70K-100K
__$10K-20K __$40K-50K __over $100K
__$20K-30K __$50K-70K

10) What percentage of your income is derived from media-related work?
__0-24% __50-74%
__25-49% __75-100%

11) What area(s) of independent media are you involved in? (check all that apply)
__teacher __film or videomaker (primary creative control)
__student __technician or craftsperson (secondary creative role)
__arts administrator (specify type of organization):
__other (specify):

12) Film/videomakers: How many years have you been working in the field? _____
How many of your films/videos have been exhibited and/or distributed?_____

B. ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

1) Where did you obtain this copy of *The Independent*:
__subscription __newsstand/bookstore __free at festival __other:

2) How many additional people in your household/office see your copy of *The Independent:*
__0 __1-2 __3-4 __over 4 __many (school/library)

3) How long do you keep your copies of *The Independent*?
__1 month __1 year __longer

4) Which article(s) have you enjoyed **most** in recent issues:

5) What section(s) do you read regularly? Check as many as appropriate.

__Features
__News
__Opinions
__Profiles
__Technology
__Wired Blue Yonder (web & new media)
__Festival Reports
__Funder FAQ (Q&A)
__Distributor FAQ (Q&A)
__Legal
__Screenwriting
__Book Reviews
__Festival listings
__Notices
__Classifieds
__On View (current releases)
__In & Out of Production
__AIVF Events

6) What would you like to read more articles on:

7) What other film/video magazines do you read:

C. ABOUT THE WEB

1) Do you have Internet access: __DSL __T1 __cable modem __modem __no access

2) Which online publications do you read:

3) In your work as a mediamaker, what do you use the web for? (Check all that apply)
__ In-depth research __ Leisure reading __ Find out deadlines (festivals, grants, etc.)
__ Online communities __ Publicizing your work __ Other:

4) Which do you read on-line: (Check all that apply)
__Nuggets __Short articles (1-2 screens) __In-depth articles (3 or more screens)

5) If *The Independent* were to increase web-original content on its site, what would most interest you:
__Breaking news
__A new technology column
__An advocacy column
__Supplemental info to the magazine's printed articles (sidebars, charts, add'l contact info)
__In-depth feature articles (3 or more screens)
__Expanded versions of printed filmmaker interviews
__Listings of festival & grant application deadlines
__Other (specify):

D. ABOUT ADVERTISING

1) Have you ever responded to a display ad in *The Independent*? __Yes __No

2) If so, what kind (check all that apply):

__equipment __insurance __film schools __film labs __software
__festivals __postproduction facilities __stock film libraries __other_____

3) As a reader, do you gravitate to 4-color ads: __ yes __makes no difference

4) Have you ever responded to an ad online? __yes __no

5) What best describes your role in purchasing/renting equipment, facilities, and services:

__You make the final decision to buy/rent specific makes, models, services, programs, facilities, etc.
__You specify or make recommendations
__You have no part in buying, renting, or specifying

6) What kind of equipment did you buy or rent (B/R) in the last 2 yrs: (check all that apply & circle Buy or Rent)

__Analog video cameras	B / R	__VCRs	B / R
__Digital video cameras	B / R	__Grip & lighting equip.	B / R
__Film cameras	B / R	__Sound equipment	B / R
__Film editing equipment	B / R	__Computer software	B / R
__Video editing equip.	B / R	__Computer hardware	B / R

7) What kind of services did you utilize in the past 2 years:

__Film labs	__Legal	__Postproduction
__Payroll, accounting	__Promotion	__Sound postproduction
__Still photographers	__Composers	__Distributors
__Stock film libraries	__Catering	__Vehicle rental
__Music libraries	__Camera hire	__Shipping & customs
__Internet/web services	__CGI/Visual FX	__Other_____

8) What additional products/services would you like to see advertised in *The Independent*:

9) Have you ever responded to a classified ad in *The Independent*? __Yes __No

10) If so, what kind? (check all that apply):

__Buy • Rent • Sell	__Opportunities • Gigs	__Freelance
__Distribution	__Preproduction • Development	__Postproduction

Additional Comments:

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around on a day-to-day basis, he did offer some advice. He told Kusama how, he says, "to get the most bang for her buck," especially when shooting her action boxing sequences. He helped her mold the script. "He's a genius about story structure," Kusama says. He led her to his long-time cinematographer Patrick Cady and his editor Plummy Tucker. He gave her the confidence to go with Rodriguez as her lead, even if she didn't have any acting experience. And he helped guide her to the rest of the money at the IFC, which he looks on very highly: "They're very calm, reasonable people. They want to show the movie and feel good about it. They're interested in new filmmakers and new voices. That's a lot of why I was interested in getting extra money and getting that particular extra money."

Kusama credits Sayles with putting her on the right path with the film, and for simply believing in her. "He was a great supporter of the story," she says. "In looking for the money, there had been such a sense of 'Who is the audience?' As if nobody wants to see a movie about a girl who struggles [and] who might be getting her shit together. John said, sure, I want to see that. He was one of the first people to say this is a no-brainer. So he planted the seed."

Rodriguez also thinks it was a no-brainer that Kusama be able to handle the specific cultural aspects of the Latina lead character. "There go the labels again," Rodriguez moans. "I just did 45 interviews in France, and nobody mentioned that at all. It's America that labels things. This is just the story of a girl's growing up as a struggle." She points out that she has as much distance from the character, having grown up in a strict religious household. In the story, as in the gym that the movie is centered around, none of that matters.

"When I go to that gym, there's this chick, she works in stock market," Rodriguez says. "She's 45, comes in wearing pumps and a power suit. She's white. She walks in there like she's part of the gang. When she comes out of the locker room wearing the boxing shoes and clothes, she's one of everybody else. It's one world there."

AT SUNDANCE, BIDDING FOR THE MOVIE TOOK OFF AS EARLY AS the first screening. People started talking about the film winning awards before the first week was out. The movie's publicist cringed at the hyped expectations and the perceived curse at the box office for films that have won Sundance's Grand Jury prize. The film sold on the fourth day of the festival to Sony Screen Gems for $2.5 million. Kusama, sequestered in a publicity suite giving interviews all day, was a little dazed herself and not sure what to do with all the compliments people were throwing her way.

Her hope for the film at that early stage was just for it to get out to people, maybe to move beyond the arthouse circuit to the kind of people who have to choose carefully what movie they see on a weekend night because they only get out once a month or so.

When the film sold to Sony Screen Gems, that looked like a possibility.

"They are sort of the division between Columbia TriStar and Sony Classics. They feel like the film can reach a wider audience than the arthouse, and I agree with them," Kusama says months later, right before heading off to Cannes. "They are going to try to reach the Latin audience. But that in itself is so diverse that it's a particular kind of new science for a lot of people in the industry."

Kusama thinks that the deal with Screen Gems bodes well for her film, given the experience of the company's head of marketing Valerie Van Gelder in putting out Miguel Arteta's *Star Maps* and in breaking out other arthouse hits like *The Full Monty* and *Waking Ned Devine* while she was at Fox Searchlight.

Beyond that, Kusama is working on her next script and watching the development of her lead actress into a magazine cover girl.

"I think Michelle has a specific idea of what she wants to do, which is quality action pictures for women. There's an *Alien* every ten or fifteen years; maybe she'll catch one."

Rodriguez, just back from Cannes, says that after having observed Hollywood for a few more months, she's more likely to write an action picture to suit her needs than star in one. She says: "The stories that come with the action are really shitty. If a girl's not tough, she's a wuss. And if she is tough, she's so tough nobody can break her. Hello? Wake up." She has already shot her next film, a drama about taxicab drivers in New York in which she plays—no surprise—a *troubled* taxicab driver. The film is directed by another newcomer, Lee Davis, and produced by Spike Lee's 40 Acres and a Mule. "Of course I worry about typecasting, I don't think there's anything I can do about it," she says. "I got into this to write. I'm going to bear with it and learn enough about the industry to do what I want later on."

Still, Kusama has some warnings for Rodriguez. "I would venture to say that the possibility is there to be eaten alive by the system—and more for women than for men. It's very important for those who don't want to be on cover of men's magazines in a bikini to establish boundaries with the industry," she says. Even as a director Kusama has to worry about that kind of thing—not the bikini but the political manipulation. "Here we are in powerful publicist's office," the director says, waving her arm at PMK's New York office. "If I were troublesome, there'd be somebody sitting in that chair over there making sure I don't say the wrong thing. I feel like we live in a very censured, censored, frightened world."

That leads Kusama into talking about her new work, *3 a.m.*, a Showtime film starring Pam Grier and Danny Glover which is a bio-thriller that delves into America's shallow have-it-all-now culture all the way down to the cellular level (yes, she knows this sounds weird, but she says, with a shrug, "It's a science fiction thing."). As much as the new film is about the terrors of scrutiny, it's also about what she's going through getting this first film out—what she calls "creating the myth of people's needs as consumers."

The pressure isn't getting to her at all. "I have to take my time to do the next thing," she says. "It's a mistake to think that you can deliver over and over again. Then you become a puppy for the system. In the end, the only person who will be marching me toward making my next film will be me."

Beth Pinsker in an associate editor at Inside.com and was previously a film critic at the Dallas Morning News.

How 11 film professors get their students to think independently.

BY ROB SABAL & JOANNA SABAL

THEY COME IN DROVES. BURSTING WITH EXCITEMENT, EYES wide and bright with the reflection of the silver screen, film and video students pour into classrooms each fall. Eager to learn the three easy steps to becoming the next Big Name Director, these students see Hollywood as the beginning and end of their journey. Fortunately for these eager wannabes, media teachers across the country are ready to set them on a different and more exciting path. Utilizing an array of creative exercises, assignments, and approaches, media educators are designing innovative courses to wake up the media artist inside these students. *The Independent* asked eleven independents who teach production to share their most successful pedagogical tricks.

"STUDENTS WANT TO REPLICATE many of the techniques, ideas, and formats they see on broadcast television," says Willie Varela, of the University of Texas-El Paso. His goal, like many faculty members, is to encourage students to take a personal approach by working with what they know—their friends, family, environment, even their own obsessions. "In other words," Varela explains, "to consciously *not* emulate the flashy, shallow codes of broadcast TV." As Louis Hock from the University of California at San Diego notes, "[Meaning] doesn't lie outside of them; they can't borrow it from anybody. It's going to come from inside of them."

Activating a student's creativity, by helping them connect their film and video work to who they are, is often the first step towards shedding the influences of the media-driven world. Many class assignments ask students to investigate themselves in order to discover their own authentic concerns, ideas, and issues. Valerie Soe, who teaches at the California State Summer School for the Arts, introduces high-school students in the program to video work by asking them to tell the story of a scar. The one-minute, edited-in-camera videotape about one of their own scars gets students working from themselves, from their own history, and from a story based in truth. Bart Weiss, of the University of Texas-Arlington, asks students to investigate themselves through a self-portrait exercise in which they are not allowed to tape themselves, any of their material possessions, or their pets. Weiss shows no examples in class and doesn't offer any advice so that students rely on their own strategies for completing the assignment. Such exercises are valuable for prompting students to detach themselves from external media models and for showing them that *they* are the vestibule for making meaningful work.

Joyan Saunders, of University of Arizona, also asks students to work from lived experience, but notes that this is not without problems. "The danger in asking students to do work from their own history is that the work will become self-indulgent and narcissistic," she observes. She combats this tendency by asking students to combine autobiography with cultural analysis, "an inward gaze upon the self, with an outward gaze upon the world." Saunders asks her students to tell their stories in an unorthodox manner by combining elements from narrative, experimental, and documentary genres. Conventional documentary form is mitigated through the use of narrative devices like metaphor, point of view, and suspense. She pushes students toward an unbounded approach, asking them to include experimental imagery, disjunctiveness, non-linearity, and self-reflexivity. "Ideally," she says, "these kinds of projects draw from the best of the three worlds and provide the means to represent a more multifaceted view than any one of the individual genres."



Embracing a new orientation is also the challenge in Ted Hardin's Idea Development course at Columbia College in

PHOTOS: PATRICIA THOMSON

Chicago. Here, students are challenged to use self-awareness as a springboard for idea development and a basis for their future work. In one assignment, Hardin asks students to write down the kinds of films they'd like to make, the stories they wish to tell. Typically, the answers are derived from mainstream films and television programs that students want to replicate. Then he takes them outside—into downtown Chicago—and asks them to walk as slowly and as deliberately as they can for 15 minutes. Hardin asks them to pay particular attention to their breath, their heartbeat, their muscles. After a few minutes, he asks them to find in their sightline a shape, pattern, or color and to focus their vision on this while they are walking.

Next, he brings them back inside and asks the same question, slightly rephrased, that opened the class: "What kinds of values are the most important to you that you wish to put into your stories—what are the most important moments that you wish to put into your stories?" After this meditation exercise, Hardin feels that the students have a much more spiritual and philosophical orientation, and a more personal approach to storytelling. Additionally, assigning this exercise allows him to skip the scolding lectures on borrowed ideas. "You just do this [exercise] and suddenly they're really excited about something personal and you've avoided talking about not doing derivative work," Hardin notes happily. "You've just turned them on to making their own [work]."

MANY FACULTY MEMBERS INTRODUCE IDEA DEVELOPMENT AND visual storytelling by asking students to work with already-existing still images. Barbara Hammer, who teaches at the New School University, asks students to make a "film strip" of images gathered from newspapers, magazines, and drawings by taping them together into a shot-by-shot series. These strips are brought in for discussion, and Hammer asks students to notice how their selection reflects the multiplicity of their own identity(ies). She asks students to seek out the ideologies that are represented by the images as she explores the notion that the students' own identities are formed in a culture in which certain ideologies are dominant. By raising questions about class position and privilege, Hammer challenges students to see behind their "seamless, homogenous" personhood.

Mara Alper encourages her students to see remarkable new visual relationships in an exercise she uses at Ithaca College in upstate New York. She asks students to bring from home a package of still photos (24 or 36 images) that they have shot, but does not reveal what the photos are to be used for, so no intentional pre-selection goes on. These images are usually of relatives, family events, and friends. Alper asks her students to arrange the photos into a sequence on the classroom floor. Often they simply arrange the photos in a simple chronology of the event, or in the order the photos were taken.

After the class views these sequences, Alper asks the students to re-arrange their photos using some kind of structure other than a chronology or logical sequence. She challenges students to explore alternative relationships like graphic elements: composition, color, shape; associative elements like setting or expression; or juxtapositions, contrasting elements, and dissonance. Alper reports that surprising and evocative new structures emerge from this exercise as students open up to new ways of seeing familiar material.



Using the beat of a metronome to conjure images

In another assignment designed to develop students' visual awareness, Alper sends small groups out onto the campus to find and film shapes or colors present in the world. Each group member has a chance to find and shoot the assigned shape. Students are directed to shoot in close-up and all editing is done in-camera. By the end of this assignment, students have had the experience of looking at their everyday environment from a completely new, visually defined perspective.

Developing the ability to be sensitive to the visual dimension of the world around them is a skill many media faculty seek to foster in their students. At Harvard University, Robb Moss' first assignment is meant to get students "out of their head and into their eyes." In order to divert them from thinking about plot, character, and Hollywood actors they'd love to cast, he asks students to select one location and to film three rolls (about eight minutes) of black-and-white reversal film at various times under various conditions, in order to make a one-minute film about light. "The aim is not so much to show objects with light falling on them, as to direct attention to the light itself, the light as it falls upon and through objects," reads Moss' assignment.

Moss admits that making a film about light may be an impossible assignment. Yet as they interpret the project in their own way, students realize what a film can be at this most elemental level. Through their struggle to photograph light under various conditions, students comprehend the fundamentals of cinematography and, according to Moss, make work that is often quite beautiful.

Moss' lesson on light also functions as an exercise in editing, as the students try to establish graphic and rhythmic connections in the interplay of the shots. Conversely, Willie Varela asks students to begin a similar single-location assignment with the graphic and rhythmic structures already in mind. They are asked to find one particular place (a cemetery, one's own home, a landscape, cityscape, or body of water) and to film it, editing in-camera. "This helps students see the camera as an instrument for truly interacting with the world," he points out, "and not simply as a recorder of images that are then subject to imposed structures."

Ellen Spiro emphasizes interacting with the world beyond the campus in her present-tense, edited-in-camera video assignments in her introductory class at the University of Texas-Austin. The first assignment, like Varella's, asks students to document a space and to communicate the feeling of that space. Spiro stresses that the "power and privilege of having a camera is to show your audience some other way of looking." As she asserts, "Student videomakers have to change their perspective, so that they can change the perspective of the viewer."

CLEARLY, BEGINNING MEDIA classes are a good place to develop students' sense of self, explore their perceptions, and introduce them to the technical and aesthetic dimensions of visual storytelling. Louis Hock's Media Sketchbook class at University of California at San Diego goes one step further, exploring the very function of media as a communication tool. While many of his colleagues ask students to work from stories based in truth, Hock asks students to employ misdirection—to produce a video that tells a lie.

Using students' scars as a starting point for their stories.



Plucking words out of a hat.

Like a self-portrait exercise, this kind of assignment is broad enough not to inhibit students while providing a structure that fosters ideas. Hock investigates this communicative act with his students by asking, "Who does the tape lie to? You can lie to the audience; you can lie inside the frame, as when people lie to each other; lies can be perceptual or visual, which leads to a more formal style of videotape;"—for instance, Dana Hodgdon's *Family Film/Reflex Film*, with its extensive use of mirrors that misdirect the viewers gaze—"or lies can be dramatic, narrative-driven lies."

The tell-a-lie exercise provides a structures that asks students to make a piece which engages the audience's thinking. Other assignments call upon students to create an emotionally evocative mood. For instance, Valerie Soe asks students to choose a piece of paper out of a hat. Written on each piece is an emotion or a state of mind. The student is then required to produce a silent, visually-oriented piece that portrays or evokes that emotion. No actors are allowed, and Soe works with the students to move them away from storytelling and towards the evocation of mood. "Having them draw the topic from a hat frees the students from focusing their energy on what they wish to do a tape about, and shifts their attention to how they wish to go about making the tape," Soe explains. "The intention is to have the students produce an impressionistic piece featuring the use of camera movement, framing, and lighting to create an emotional state."

This assignment also illustrates a tactic many media educators employ—the use of chance as the basis of an assignment. Lilly Boruszkowski employs chance in an exercise in her classes at Southern Illinois University that demonstrates the important relationship between sound and image. Every student in the class creates a short (60 to 90 second) soundtrack. Through a random drawing, each student picks another student's soundtrack, then must create a film that relates to it. "The purpose," Boruszkowski says, "is to demonstrate how sound suggests image, and to go beyond 'literal' content and tap into mood, tone, and texture."

Mara Alper also uses the sound-image link. Setting up a metronome in the classroom, she asks students to write on index cards the images that come to mind when the metronome is beating a slow tempo. Then they do the same for a fast tempo. Once students have produced two sets of cards, Alper asks them to lay out a sequence exploring the dynamic of rising and falling action as represented by the images that were evoked by the rhythm of the metronome. Through the suggestive qualities of rhythm, Alper is able to demonstrate the construction of dynamic montage.

Surprisingly, some of the best lessons for novice mediamakers are also the least constructed. Louis Hock's Media Sketchbook class is just that—a place to sketch. With an assignment of one short videotape per week and no big final project, Hock states that the class is about making No-thing. "Not all production courses have to produce things," he asserts. "They can produce ideas that are used in subsequent production courses."

Ellen Spiro contends that mistakes are the best opportunities for evolving as an artist. The second exercise in her beginning course is an edited-in-camera documentary portrait with sound, an assignment ripe with opportunities for missteps. "Mistakes can be incorporated into the work in positive ways that can't happen if a student attempts to formulate an aesthetic approach from the beginning," she says.

Clearly, the objective in all of the strategies represented here is helping the students drop their Hollywood vision and develop as artistic and thoughtful mediamakers. They learn to relinquish the media ideals that possessed them as they learn to rely on themselves. "Students discover that using their own first-hand experience has the ring of truth, and that their truth is more original than any clichéd fiction they might rely on," says Joyan Saunders.

Students who are privileged to work with these committed teachers learn to see the world with a new vision, to listen with new ears, and to value themselves as a source of rich material for future film and video work. Spiro states it succinctly. "It's about the students getting *through* the fear and getting *through to* the risk."

Rob Sabal is a film and videomaker and chair of the Department of Visual and Media Arts at Emerson College. Joanna Sabal is a freelance writer and screenwriter. They live (together) near the ocean north of Boston.

Work That Inspires

Here's what being screened in classes to inspire students to think differently about what's possible in film and video.

Bruce Baillie—***All My Life*** (1966) 3 min., color, sound, 16mm. "One shot, early summer in Mendocino." ***Valentine de las Sierras*** (1964) 10 min., color, sound, 16mm. "Skin, eyes, knees, horses, sun, earth. Old song of Mexican hero, Valentin, sung by blind Jose Santollo Nasido en Santa Cruz de la Soledad." Distributed by Canyon Cinema Cooperative.

Sadie Benning—***The Works of Sadie Benning*** (1989-90) 50 min., B&W, color, video; ***Me and Rubyfruit*** (1989-90) 18 min., B&W, color, video. Many faculty mentioned Benning's work as demonstrating a thoughtful yet humorous combination of the personal and political. Shot on Pixelvision, its low-tech quality provides evidence that students don't need high production values and the latest special effects to make something meaningful. Benning's work focuses on growing up lesbian in the 1980s. Distributed by Women Make Movies (WMM).

Stan Brakhage—***Dog Star Man*** (1961-64) 78 min.; ***Sexual Mediation Hotel*** (1972) 8 min.; and ***Mothlight*** (1963) 4 min.; were mentioned by Moss and Varella as examples of Brakhage's work that is most about light and seeing. Distributed by Canyon.

Su Friedrich—***Sink or Swim*** (1990) 48 min., B&W, 16mm. Another example of personal doc combined with experimental techniques. The film is about the emotional ties and broken bonds between daughter and father as told through 26 short stories progressing from Z to A. Distributed by WMM.

Mindy Faber—***Delirium*** (1993) 20 min., video. Combines a portrait of Faber's mother's "hysteria" with an investigation of the cultural forces that oppress women. Saunders suggests this tape as an example of the "gaze inward upon the self and outward upon the world." Distributed by Video Data Bank (VDB).

George Kuchar—***Weather Diary 1*** (1986) 81 min., video. Several faculty use Kuchar's diary work as an example of controlled and sophisticated in-camera editing and self portraiture. *Weather Diary 1* investigates one month in a trailer park/motel in Oklahoma. Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Kathy High—***Underexposed: Temple of the Fetus*** (1993) 58 min., video. Saunders uses this piece about how new reproductive technologies affect women to show the combination of narrative, experimental, and documentary modes and the intersection of self-interrogation and cultural analysis. Distributed by VDB.

Peter Hutton—***New York Near Sleep*** (1972), 10 min., silent, B&W, 16mm. Several faculty show this work. J.J. Murphy from the Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison values it as a "diary of light" and for its emphasis on what's happening in the shot itself, rather than between the shots. Moss says Hutton is a "master of the Bolex" and notes his films' painterly quality. Distributed by Canyon.

Trinh T. Minh-ha—***Reassemblage*** (1982), 40 min., 16mm/video. Shot in Senegal on a little hand-wound camera, *Reassemblage* "questions the conventions of ethnographic film and is radical in its use of editing style and language," says Barbara Hammer. "Native speech is untranslated, so the audience's attention is directed to the rhythms and manners of the speech, suggesting that this element is as important as the meaning of the words themselves. Brilliant!" Distributed by WMM.

Tracey Moffat—***Night Cries*** (1990) 17 min., color, 16mm. Ted Hardin uses this to illustrate a personal treatment of race, cultural identity, and memory. Told largely through sound, *Night Cries* is the story of an Aboriginal woman who is duty-bound to

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(below): Peace, (wo)man: From Mindy Faber's *Delirium*.

(right): Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*, a milestone in both black and gay film.



(left): From Nino Rodriguez' *Identities*.

(below): The wallpaper-hanger rings twice: From Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women*.

Brave New World: Kathy High's *Underexposed: Temple of the Fetus*.

(CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT) COURTESY: VIDEO DATA BANK, *P.O.V.*, FILMMAKER, ZEITGEIST FILMS, VIDEO DATA BANK

Considering a DV-to-35mm transfer? Not all transfers are alike. To spotlight the differences, *The Independent* conducted a test of 10 transfer facilities. Here are the results.

DV to 35mm
Putting Transfers to the Test

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN



Robert Goodman during the shoot of test footage.

LIKE MANY OF YOU, WE'VE SEEN WONDERFUL films in theaters and at festivals shot on video and transferred to film. Magazine stories about video-to-film transfers abound, though usually lacking hard information. So, *The Independent* decided to do a consumer report on video-to-film transfer facilities. Our plan was to ask facilities serving independents to participate in a test. Every lab would receive identical footage to transfer to 35mm film. Then we would host a blind screening for a panel of experts and publish the results. Sounds simple, right? And it is, until you start considering the dozens of issues concerning shooting video for transfer to film. The deeper you go, the more questions there are. Which video format to use—BetaSP, miniDV, DVCAM, DVCPRO, DigiBeta, or HDCAM? Which standard is best—PAL or NTSC? How should the aspect ratio be handled? It's easy to get lost if you lose sight of the goal—to test the facilities.

The Challenges

We wanted to shoot material that would highlight the challenges involved in transferring video to film. The first is that video has far less resolution than film; it must be increased during the transfer process. A digital video image (in NTSC) is 720x486 non-square pixels. Do the math and you'll discover that NTSC video has a maximum resolution of 349,920 pixels. PAL has a slightly higher maximum resolution, 414,720 pixels, though it too pales in comparison to the resolution of 35mm motion picture film. Film has an approximate resolution above three million 'pixels.' It's quantified differently because film uses a chemical process rather than an electronic one.

Every frame of video employs the same number of pixels to recreate the image. The reflected light from the scene is overlaid on a pixel grid and recorded. A finer grid reproduces diagonals and curves better because it reduces the amount of aliasing needed to create those shapes. Aliasing is the result of using rectangular or square pixels to render diagonals or curves. Under magnification, the edges of curves and diagonals have a saw-toothed or stair-stepped appearance. Film doesn't have this problem because its grain structure varies from frame to frame.

Standard definition video uses interlacing to record images. Every second of video is composed of 60 fields (50 in PAL). Each field contains half the picture as alternating lines of information. Video must be de-interlaced (the fields combined) as part of the transfer process, because each frame of film is a complete picture.

Video has a different frame rate (29.97 frames per second in NTSC; 25 fps in PAL) that must be adjusted to the film standard—24 fps—during the transfer process. Motion blur, a characteristic of film, is a result of shooting at 24fps with a shutter speed of 1/48 of a second. Video cameras operate at a higher shutter speed—1/60 or 1/50 of a second—which reduces motion blur. However, the faster shutter speed may introduce strobing or flicker.

The standard aspect ratio for video is 1.33. 35mm film has an aspect ratio of 1.37, which is cropped to 1.85 in the projector. A video image must be cropped at the top and bottom to fill this frame. Some video cameras can record 16:9 images (a 1.78 aspect ratio). This reduces the cropping and increases apparent vertical resolution. However, only more expensive cameras have true 16:9 CCDs (with wide-screen pixels); miniDV camcorders electronically squeeze the image on a smaller portion of the CCD to create the wide-screen format. Unfortunately, this lowers resolution because fewer pixels are employed to record the image.

There's also a big disparity between the tonal reproduction or gamma curve for film and video. Video has a narrower latitude and reproduces fewer graduations from light to dark. Which is why lighting contrast ratios are usually set lower when shooting video. Another difference between film and video is that boundaries between bright and dark areas have soft edges in film. In video, the boundaries often have hard edges.

Designing the Test Footage

Originally we planned to shoot with a variety of cameras—HDTV versus DV, Sony versus Canon. But in order to compare apples to apples and focus on the transfers, we decided to limit ourselves to a single type of digital camera. Canon provided *The Independent* with both DV cameras for this test. At NAB 2000 Canon USA announced they would sell the PAL version of the XL1 in the U.S. to support independents. Canon subsequently

ALL PHOTOS BOB GIARDINI

went out of their way to make sure the first PAL XL1 they received from Japan was shipped to us for our shoot. They also supplied manual lenses.

Though we planned to limit our test to miniDV, Eastman Kodak asked if we would be willing to also shoot Super16mm. They wanted to test the difference between S16mm electronically scanned and output to 35mm versus a direct optical blowup.

Abel CineTech supplied an Aaton XTR Prod package with Canon Zoom lenses for the shoot because Aaton's new 16mm camera (the same size as an XL1) wasn't available yet. Birns & Sawyer provided XL1 accessories, including Image 2000 matte boxes, Mosquito Matte box, filters, and Chroszeil Follow Focus with gearing for Canon lenses.

Savino Vergoglini, an award-winning director of photography with vast experience in film and video, agreed to shoot the tests. After long discussions about the challenges of transferring video to film with a number of facilities, independents, and technical experts, I planned what we would shoot.

The lighting would be designed to make miniDV look as good as possible. Limiting the test to miniDV also simplified the postproduction plan. Avid loaned us an XpressDV system so we could edit in native miniDV and output to miniDV. The DV edit masters were dubbed using component digital to D1 for the online edit. Tim Spitzer at Tape House in New York graciously agreed to do the PAL and NTSC D1 onlines and tape-to-tape



Live action scene #1: The kitchen with backlighting.

color correction sessions, gratis. Ayres D'Cunha of Analog Digital International generously donated tape stock for duplicating 20 masters. Birgit Rathsmann kindly volunteered to create title animation on her G4. She provided frames on a zip disk for output at the online. Tape House also duplicated D1 or DigiBeta masters for the facilities.

Our lab list was obtained by locating and asking as many facilities as possible to participate. We invited Digital Image(4MC), Efilm, and Sony HiDef in Los Angeles; Cineric, Cinesite NY, DuArt, and Tape House Digital Film in New York; DV Film Digital Transfers in Austin; Digital Devoid in Seattle; and FilmCraft in Detroit. From Canada, Digital Film Group in Vancouver and Cinebyte Imaging and Soho Digital Film in Toronto were invited, while in Europe, Hokus Bogus in Denmark; Swiss Effects in Switzerland; and Cinesite Europe and The Mill in the United Kingdom were asked. Some labs said no, others were too busy to meet our deadline. We ended up with 10 participants from around the world. (Of course after our deadline, we learned about a dozen more.)

The Raw Material

There are seven parts to the test footage, which runs about two minutes. The first is a title sequence consisting of static white letters against a black background, followed by an animated sequence in color. Next come three live action scenes, then three identical tabletop shots using different modes of the camera: interlace, frame mode (progressive scan), and 16:9 mode (electronic anamorphic). We also shot with a prototype optical anamorphic adapter from Century Precision optics. However, we made an error placing it on the lens and had to eliminate it from the test.

The live action segments begins with a breakfast scene (three shots). Two actors, a man and a woman, were shot in a small sunlit kitchen. They were lit with a contrast ratio of 1:2.5 with strong backlight coming from the windows. The actors gesture and move. No filtration was used on the cameras and the gain was set at -3dB setting—no electronic processing. The scene was designed to test tonal reproduction, motion interpolation, and de-interlacing. Of interest was how each lab would handle areas above 100 IRE. In the closeups, the man, who is heavily pierced and very pale, is seen against a window at 105 IRE and a wall in shadow. There are specular highlights on his metal piercings. His hair is bleached blonde. The woman is seen against a window at 110 IRE. A 1/2 Promist filter was placed on the lens to smooth her skin tones and test a typical decision—to glamorize the actress in her close ups.

The third part is a sequence of five shots of a bride and her father. The bride in a medium shot walks down a staircase that has strong vertical lines. She moves through a mixed lighting situation—shadow and sunlight. Her dress is made from "rat wire" and pulled through fabric. The dress appears as a uniform mesh or as a distinct square pattern, depending on the proximity to the lens. The scene is designed to test de-interlacing, resolution, motion interpolation, and tonal reproduction. Again it was shot with no filtration and -3dB gain.



Live action scene #2: The bride with rat-wire dress and shifting color temperatures.

TITLE SEQUENCE

TRANSFER FACILITY	FORMAT	TITLES
Cinesite Europe	PAL	100
Swiss Effects	NTSC	93
DV Film	NTSC	78
Cinesite New York	PAL	76
Cinesite New York	NTSC	72
Swiss Effects	PAL	70
Digital Image EBR	NTSC	66
Digital Film Group	NTSC	64
Hokus Bogus	PAL	60
Tape House Digital Film	PAL	60
Digital Image 2K Res	PAL	53
Cineric	NTSC	52
FilmCraft Kinescope	NTSC	48
Digital Image EBR	PAL	45
Hokus Bogus	NTSC	45

The close-up of the bride was shot handheld to introduce some camera motion and push in on the metal pattern of the dress. A Tiffen Gold FX2 filter was added for her close up. The gold color was reduced by half during tape-to-tape correction. Next, the bride crosses the frame in front of her dad, who wears a black morning coat with a white shirt and a red bow tie, to judge de-interlacing, resolving power, and tonal capabilities. The medium shot of the father puts pale skin tones against deep blacks, bright red, and deep blues in the background. This medium close-up was designed to evaluate tonal reproduction and color fidelity.

The bride exits the house into sunlight making a transition from dark to light. There's lots of detail in her dress, reflections of the sky and clouds in the windows, and shifting color temperatures. The exterior of the house is a pale green shade, difficult to reproduce, and white.



Live action scene #3: Badminton as dusk falls.

The fourth part is a series of shots of people playing badminton against a skyline as the light changes from dusk to dark. This situation places bold movement in juxtaposition to a complex background under falling light conditions. The wide and medium shots use longer focal lengths. The scene is designed to test motion interpolation, resolution, tonal reproduction, and the impact of electronic gain on picture quality. Initial level was +0dB gain. The gain was increased to +6dB and to +12dB as the light fell.

The final sequence is a tabletop move over skeins of yarn ending on magazine covers and a MacBeth color chip chart. The light levels are even. This scene is designed to measure color fidelity, especially in the reds, and green and magenta range. The presence of type in a moving shot is designed to measure resolution and motion interpolation. All were shot at -3dB gain with no filtration. During the online, black gamma was extended from 10 IRE to 0 IRE and the yellow cast to the whites were adjusted. No other corrections were made. The PAL footage was a 1/4 stop hotter than the NTSC version.

The Screening

The principal evaluators were Mark Schubin, a consulting engineer and SMPTE fellow who's considered one of the foremost authorities and analysts on video and film imagery; Savino Vergoglini, the DP; and myself. Two experienced producer/directors, Mark Moskowitz and Pat McGrath also evaluated the clips. In addition, Moskowitz contributed a statistical analysis of the data. Elizabeth Peters, AIVF's executive director, who assembled the clip reels, provided her rankings and Birgit Rathsmann judged the title performance of each facility.

The Results

Every facility uses a kinescope, electron beam recorder, or film recorder to produce the film negative. What differs from facility to facility is customer service and the software used to optimize the image before recording to film. Only a few facilities have in-house film processing; most send the negative out for processing and printing. Every facility offers different recommendations because they optimize their software to handle PAL, NTSC, a specific aspect ratio, or recording standard. We choose to see what everyone could do with the identical footage.

Cineric prefers doing PAL transfers. Unfortunately, their PAL transfer was ruined during processing. The NTSC transfer we saw scored very low marks, partly because the print was very dark and contrasty. The contrast in the animated title between light and dark blue was too great. Motion reproduction was very poor; all of the tabletop sequences strobed badly. The anamorphic footage was not resized. Cineric is redoing and resubmitting their tests.

Cinesite Europe sent only a PAL transfer. However, they do transfer NTSC. They received the highest combined scores and were ranked number one by everyone. Cinesite Europe uses Kodak's Lightning gas laser recorder and proprietary "Fido" soft-

LIVE ACTION

TRANSFER FACILITY	FORMAT	LIVE ACTION SCENES	MOTION REPRO
Swiss Effects	PAL	288	57
Cinesite Europe	PAL	286	56
Swiss Effects	NTSC	252	50
DV Film	NTSC	248	51
Cinesite New York	PAL	238	42
Cinesite New York	NTSC	231	50
Swiss Effects	PAL	230	45
Digital Image EBR	NTSC	230	43
Digital Film Group	NTSC	224	51
Hokus Bogus	PAL	223	43
Tape House Digital Film	PAL	214	45
Digital Image 2K Res	PAL	204	42
Cineric	NTSC	197	41
FilmCraft Kinescope	NTSC	194	38
Digital Image EBR	PAL	185	39
Hokus Bogus	NTSC	179	30

TRANSFER FACILITY	FORMAT	TABLE TOP SCORE	IMAGE QUALITY	RESOLUTION	MOTION REPRO'DN	COLOR FIDELITY	PROGRESSIVE	ANAMORPHIC
Cinesite Europe	PAL	83	21	21	20	21	79	78
Swiss Effects	PAL	77	19	18	21	19	72	65
Hokus Bogus	PAL	70	17	17	19	17	75	70
Digital Image 2K	PAL	68	16	16	19	17	68	70
Swiss Effects	NTSC	68	17	16	17	18	53	49
Cinesite New York	PAL	65	16	17	17	15	65	60
Tape House Digital Film	PAL	63	15	15	17	16	0	0
Film Craft Kinescope	NTSC	63	16	17	15	15	54	59
Digital Film Group	NTSC	60	15	13	15	17	0	58
Digital Image EBR	PAL	55	13	12	14	16	62	60
Film Craft CRT	NTSC	55	15	13	12	15	53	0
Digital Image EBR	NTSC	53	14	12	12	15	48	52
Hokus Bogus	NTSC	51	13	12	13	13	46	49
Cinesite New York	NTSC	50	13	14	10	13	48	46
DV Film	NTSC	48	13	12	10	13	50	49
Cineric	NTSC	47	12	13	10	12	43	43

ware. The title colors and focus were very accurate. The live action and tabletop scenes were very clean with good detail. There was some aliasing in the bridal scene on the staircase. The colors tended to change in the dusk to dark scene as darkness fell. Schubin felt the progressive scan version was a tiny better than the interlace version and saw less resolution in the anamorphic version.

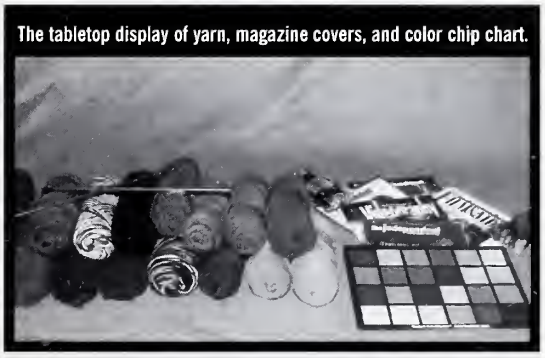
Cinesite New York submitted both PAL and NTSC transfers. Their PAL version scored higher than their NTSC transfer by about the same margin in everyone's scores. The NTSC print was too dark. The PAL version too bright. Cinesite NY scored well on the live action sequences in both versions.

NTSC version: Whenever there was vertical motion in the bridal scene, the picture resolution fell apart. Motion judder (strobing) was visible in the dusk scene. The tabletop sequences all strobed and scored poorly.

PAL version: The turquoise went green in the titles and there was too much contrast, though the titles were clean. Any diagonal in the breakfast scene, even in the man's black turtleneck sweater, had visible aliasing. The reds smeared in the dusk scene, and the picture was grainy. Motion reproduction was better than average. The PAL anamorphic tabletop sequence was resized in the middle of the shot.

Digital Film Group recommends shooting NTSC in 16:9 (squeezed or true 16:9). They sent an NTSC transfer. The titles were clean, though very soft and too blue. The blue color shift remained consistent; the timing of the print was probably off. There was visible chroma shift to the left in every part of the test. Everything was soft which eliminated visible aliasing and motion jitter artifacts. The progressive scan tabletop sequence was not done. The evaluators split; some liked this transfer, others didn't. Reaction to the color balance may have influenced the scores.

Digital Image (4MC) did three tests: a PAL and an NTSC version using their Electron Beam Recorder and a PAL version using their 2K resolution process. The PAL EBR titles had correct colors though oversaturated with lots of edge ringing. This held true for every sequence in this clip. The dusk scene was soft and went softer with increased gain. The tabletop sequences had poor resolution when there was motion. The progressive scan version improved the situation.


The tabletop display of yarn, magazine covers, and color chip chart.

The NTSC EBR test had cleaner titles—no edge ringing but the focus wasn't crisp. The print was contrasty. There was a loss of resolution with motion in the bridal scene and motion errors. The dusk scene was soft. Motion and color strobing dominated the tabletop sequences.

The PAL 2K version titles were in focus but the colors were off. Again, a very contrasty print. Schubin commented that the bridal scene may have been done in field mode because the motion reproduction was noticeably good. The dusk scene was soft, had pulsing lights, and no mid-tones. The tabletop sequences received better marks.

DV Film submitted an NTSC transfer. The colors and sharpness of the titles were very good and ranked third. This print was warm and contrasty. There was noticeable diagonal aliasing in hair in the breakfast scene and edge twitter in the bride's dress. The dusk scene had some color smear and line twitter. There were fewer motion errors in the skyline pan than in some transfers. Unfortunately that wasn't the case in the tabletop test. Strobing and poor resolution produced low scores. These scores improved slightly on the progressive and anamorphic tabletop sequences. One evaluator ranked DV Film's live action scenes as the best NTSC transfer. Among NTSC transfers, they placed third in live action and second to last in the tabletop test.

COMBINED SCORES

TRANSFER FACILITY	FORMAT	TOTAL SCORE	0-100 SCALE	GOODMAN	SCHUBIN	VERGOGLINI	MCGRATH	MOSKOWITZ
Cinesite Europe	PAL	394	79	81	74	81	79	79
Swiss Effects	PAL	382	76	79	74	79	82	68
Swiss Effects	NTSC	343	69	75	68	62	80	58
Cinesite New York	PAL	332	66	71	64	60	70	67
Hokus Bogus	PAL	316	63	69	61	78	46	62
Cinesite New York	NTSC	306	61	67	60	58	66	55
FilmCraft Kinescope	NTSC	305	61	62	53	69	73	48
Digital Image 2K Res	PAL	305	61	60	65	79	47	55
DV Film	NTSC	298	60	54	63	58	57	66
Tape House Digital Film	PAL	292	58	69	63	42	52	66
Digital Image EBR	NTSC	279	56	57	61	58	54	49
FilmCraft CRT	NTSC	278	56	54	50	69	51	54
Digital Film Group	NTSC	273	55	67	54	43	53	56
Digital Image EBR	PAL	270	54	52	45	58	57	58
Hokus Bogus	NTSC	247	49	53	54	41	47	52
Cineric	NTSC	239	48	59	45	41	44	50

FilmCraft sent two NTSC transfers. One was a kinescope and the other was company's more expensive CRT process. The kinescope version did poorly on transferring titles. Video scan lines were visible. There was chroma shift and motion artifacts in the live action scenes. No titles were done on the CRT version. This print was dark and contrasty. Whenever there was any motion, there was a major loss of resolution. In the tabletop shot, there was double imaging in the interlace version and strobing in the progressive scan version. The anamorphic version was not transferred. FilmCraft's kinescope rated higher than FilmCraft's expensive transfer; it scored fourth in the NTSC live action category and second in the tabletop test.

Hokus Bogus in Denmark received the masters very late because of customs problems and had to rush to meet our deadline. They only handle PAL, yet, transferred both versions. The prints we received were very dark and contrasty.

PAL transfer: the title colors were too dark though in the proper relationship to each other. There were minor motion artifacts in live action sequences. Gain increases, during the dusk scene, noticeably affected resolution. Video tearing was evident in the tabletop shots. The progressive version of the pan scored highest. Hokus Bogus also transferred the optical anamorphic version, which looked promising. They ranked fourth among PAL live action transfers and third in the tabletop category.

NTSC transfer: The print was extremely dark. The titles were slightly out of focus and very dark. There was a visible loss of resolution with motion in the bridal scene. Aliasing was visible whenever there was motion in the breakfast and dusk scene. The colors smeared in both of those sequences. The tabletop sequences strobed badly. The resolution in the progressive version completely fell apart. The optical anamorphic version had the best resolution. Hokus Bogus ranked second to last in live action and near the bottom in the tabletop category.

Swiss Effects recommends PAL, though they also do NTSC transfers. Their NTSC and PAL transfers both scored high. The PAL version had clean, sharp titles though the aspect ratio was off. The breakfast scene was slightly dark. Highlights in the windows had a bluish cast and aliasing was visible in the hair. In the bridal scene, there was a loss of resolution with motion. The

PRICING

TRANSFER FACILITY	35MM PRICE*	16MM PRICE	TURNAROUND	NTSC/PAL	MASTER FORMATS
Cineric	$450		4 Weeks	Either	3, 4, 8, 9, 12
Cinesite Europe	870£ ($1,325)		8 Weeks	Either	8, 9
Cinesite New York	450-1,000		4-8 Weeks	Either	4, 6, 7, 8, 9
Digital Film Group	400		3-4 Weeks	Either	1-4, 6-12
Digital Image EBR#	425	180	2-3 Weeks	Either	8, 9, 11, 12
Digital Image 2K#	750		2-3 Weeks	Either	8, 9, 11, 12
DV Film Transfers	375	245	2 Weeks	Either	1-6, 8-10, 12
Film Craft Kinescope	260		2 Weeks	NTSC only	3, 8, 9
Film Craft CRT	per project basis			NTSC only	3, 8, 9
Hokus Bogus	300 DK ($385)		4 Weeks	Either	4, 8, 9
Swiss Effects PAL	440		3 Weeks	Either	1-12 (ALL)
Swiss Effects NTSC	470		3 Weeks	Either	1-12 (ALL)
Tape House Digital Film	600		2 Weeks	PAL only	4, 8, 9

MASTER FORMAT KEY			
1- Hi-8	**4**- miniDV	**7**- DVCPRO	**10**- D2
2- S-VHS	**5**- Digital8	**8**- DigiBeta	**11**- D5
3- Beta SP	**6**- DVCAM	**9**- D1	**12**- HD

* Approximate per-minute prices based on 90-minute projects, including optical sound track and one answer print. For an exact price, please contact the facility.

Digital Image charges an additional fee for removing the negative.

tabletop sequences were too saturated but motion reproduction was very good. Swiss Effects also transferred the optical anamorphic footage; again very promising.

The NTSC version had very clean, sharp titles. The live action sequences garnered very high marks. In the breakfast scene, there was practically no aliasing in the hair. In the bridal scene, there was some edge twitter on the dress and a slight loss of resolution with vertical motion. The tabletop progressive and electronic anamorphic sequences scored much lower due to poor resolution and motion reproduction. Swiss Effects was very consistent—both tests had the same look and feel.

Tape House Digital Film does only PAL transfers and recommends using the progressive scan mode. The PAL print we saw was bright and contrasty. The turquoise color and aspect ratio of the animation were incorrect. In the live action scenes, highlights were washed out. However, there was no aliasing, even in hair, during the breakfast scene. Vertical motion in the bridal scene caused a loss of resolution. The color and focus changed as the light levels fell in the dusk scene. Only one tabletop test was transferred. We ranked this test second to last among PAL transfers.

Conclusions

PAL material is easier to transfer and received better scores than NTSC originated material. However, the best NTSC transfers looked better than the average or below-average PAL transfers. Some facilities transferred the optical anamorphic material. The results were inconclusive though worthy of exploration. Some facilities handled electronic anamorphic footage with only minor losses in resolution. Canon's progressive scan mode offered minimal benefits though it did cause problems for some. Our results may not be accurate because some facilities may not have transferred the progressive scan material properly.

A carefully done kinescope scored better than several more expensive transfers. Though it did not look like film—video scan lines were highly visible—some evaluators ignored it because the color, contrast, and motion reproduction were good. At $260/minute it was the lowest cost option we tested.

There was wide variation in the prints. Some were not timed and others timed poorly. Less variation was expected since everyone had a video reference. However, most facilities send their negatives out for processing. The ones that communicated more closely with the film lab probably scored better than those that didn't. Having one film lab process and print all the negatives would have eliminated this variable.

Some facilities did an outstanding job on the live action and less well on the tabletop test. Others the reverse. Everyone ranked Cinesite Europe's PAL transfer as the best one. Swiss Effects' PAL transfer was a close second. After that the results become murkier. Hokus Bogus, Cinesite NY, Tape House Digital Film, and Digital Image's 2K PAL transfer scored well. Swiss Effects achieved the best overall score for NTSC transfers, though not with universal agreement. Cinesite NY, DV Film, Filmcraft's Kinescope, and Digital Image's EBR NTSC transfers also received high marks.

This is a very subjective process. It was never our intention to declare a "winner." Everyone watched all the clips straight through, once. Then, we screened everything again, stopping after each test to record our comments. The tabletop footage was easier to score because the problems were easier to spot. The live action scenes, beyond judging how skin tones looked, were difficult to evaluate. Everyone paid attention to different things at different times based on their written comments.

Would repeated showings change our scores? It's possible the rankings would shift. Though I doubt our opinions of the best and worst would flip flop. The best way to evaluate the results is to see the tests and form your own opinions. I hope you'll have the opportunity to do so at the seminar we will present on September 16. See page 9 and watch www.aivf.org for pending details.

Robert Goodman [goodman@histories.com] is an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director based in Philadelphia.

For a discussion of DV-to-35mm transfers, visit the "Independent Discourse" forum of AIVF online: www.aivf.org/discussion

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Artistic License Films, 250 W. 57th St., Ste. 606, NY NY 10107; (212) 265-9119; 262-9299; artlic@aol.com; www.artlic.com; Contact: Sande Zeig, president, Vicky Waldron, VP acquisitions

What is Artistic License Films?
A film distribution company.

Who is Artistic License?
Sande Zeig, president (pictured above); Vicky Waldron, vice-president of acquisitions and business affairs; Steve Fagan, vice-president of theatrical distribution; Anne Crozat, distribution associate; Nora Coblence, financial manager.

Total number of employees at Artistic License:
Five, plus we're very committed to our trailer maker, poster designers, promotions company, printers, and publicists.

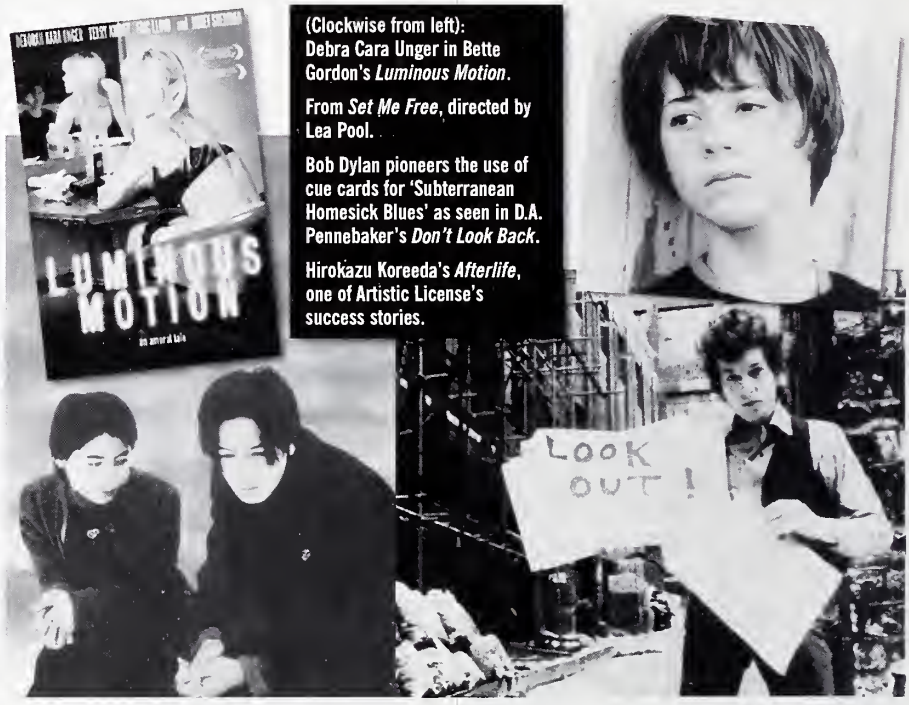
How, when, and why did Artistic License come into being?
In 1994, after leaving her job as director of theatrical sales at First Run Features, Sande Zeig started booking a handful of films including Mark Rappaport's *Rock Hudson's Home Movies*, Michel Negroponte's *Jupiter's Wife*, and Yale Strom's *The Last Klezmer*. These were great small films that weren't finding theatrical distribution and needed specialized attention to work in the commercial market. This endeavor developed into Artistic License.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind Artistic License:
Make the filmmakers happy.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Artistic License's staff?
Sande Zeig directed her first feature film *The Girl* which will premiere in Toronto this September; she does a great handstand. Vicky Waldron is the associate producer of *The Girl*; she doesn't believe in the positive effects of yoga. Steve Fagan is not somebody to be joked about. Ann Crozat is the newest member of the staff and Sande almost has her convinced about the positive effects of yoga. Nora Coblence knows everybody you'd ever want to know.

How many works are in your collection?
About 50.

Filmmakers and films you distribute:



(Clockwise from left): Debra Cara Unger in Bette Gordon's *Luminous Motion*.

From *Set Me Free*, directed by Lea Pool.

Bob Dylan pioneers the use of cue cards for 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' as seen in D.A. Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back*.

Hirokazu Koreeda's *Afterlife*, one of Artistic License's success stories.

Bette Gordon's *Luminous Motion*, Robert Pappas' *Some Fish Can Fly*, Kore-eda Hirokazu's *Afterlife*, Matthew Diamond's *Dancemaker*, Barbara Sonnenborn's *Regret to Inform*, Jill Sprecher's *Clockwatchers*, Fridrik Thor Fridriksson's *Devil's Island* and *Cold Fever*, Catherine Gund's *Hallelujah*, Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker's *Moon Over Broadway*, D.A. Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back*, Jeanne Jordan and Steve Ascher's *Troublesome Creek*, Michel Negroponte's *Jupiter's Wife*. In association with Merchant Ivory Films we also distribute Lea Pool's *Set Me Free*, Theo Angelopoulous' *Eternity and a Day*, and Alain Renais' *Same Old Song*.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
We look for films we love, films we feel will stand out in a competitive market.

Is Artistic License also involved in co-production or co-financing of works.
Not yet, but we will be.

Is there such a thing as an Artistic License film?
A film becomes an Artistic License film only after we've distributed it.

Best known title in Artistic License's collection:
Afterlife or *Cold Fever*.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Innovate.

Where do Artistic License titles generally show?
Everywhere: calendar houses, first run houses, chains from AMC to UA.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ARTISTIC LICENSE

Tips, faxes, tapes. We acquire at Toronto, Sundance, Cannes, Rotterdam. Filmmakers are encouraged to send us their films on video.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From $150,000 to $3 million.

Biggest change at Artistic License in recent years:
We started releasing films in association with Merchant Ivory Films last year.

Most important issue facing Artistic License today:
Growth.

Where will Artistic License be ten years from now?
Ten times as big, ten times as profitable.

You knew Artistic License had made it as a company when . . .
Afterlife made *Variety's* 250 Highest Grossing Films of the Year in 1999.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
Afterlife grossed over $800,000 in theatrical—a Hollywood remake is in the works.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Making films.

Other distributors you admire and why:
Sony Classics for the quality of work they distribute and New Yorker Films for leading the way.

The difference between Artistic License and other distributors of independent film is . . .
Artistic License works closely with filmmakers on all creative aspects of the release.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
include a line item for distribution in your production budget.

Upcoming title to watch for:
Lynne Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* (in association with Merchant Ivory).

The future of independent film distribution in this country is . . .
in our hands.

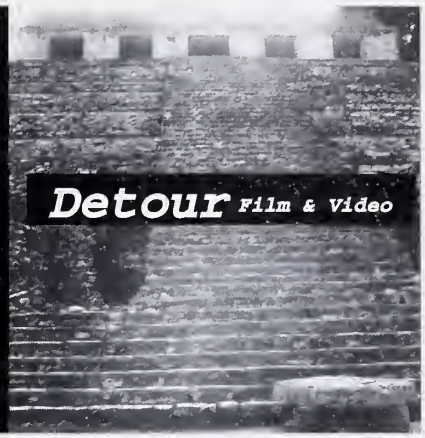
Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013; or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

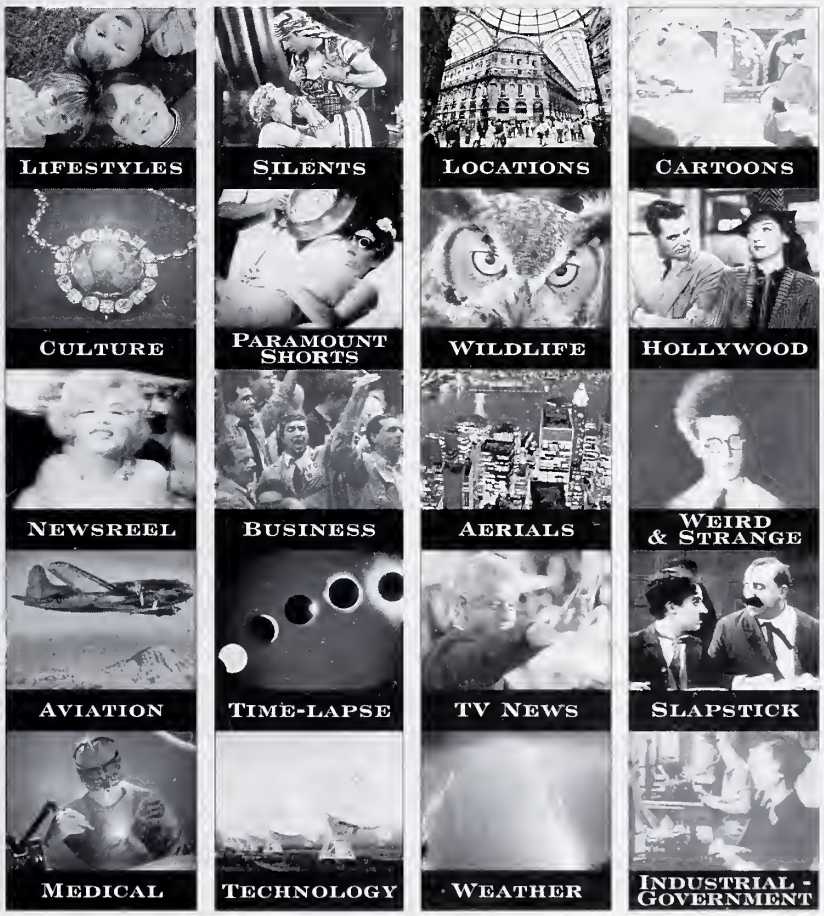
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THOUSAND WORDS FINISHING FUND

BY MICHELLE COE



ON A CLEAR DAY: Scott Caan (left) and Leo Burmester in Rob Schmidt's *Saturn*, one of the early projects funded by Thousand Words Finishing Fund.

(inset) Ellen Burstyn in *Requiem for a Dream*, Darren Anonofsky's follow-up to π, which availed funds from Thousand Words.

Thousand Words Finishing Fund, Palmer West, co-president; finishing fund coordinator, Brian Costello; 601 W. 26th St., 11th fl., New York, NY 10040; (212) 331-8900; fax: 343-2134; www.thousand-words.com

What is Thousand Words?

Thousand Words is an independent film production and financing company devoted to creating innovative and engaging entertainment. Most recently, Thousand Words produced and co-financed with Artisan Entertainment Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream*, his follow-up picture to π. Additionally, Thousand Words is producing and co-financing with IFC an animated feature, *Waking Life*, directed by Richard Linklater (*Slacker, Dazed & Confused*) and developing numerous new projects. This past winter, Thousand Words also launched a new $500,000 Finishing Fund.

Who makes up the company?

We're made up of six people: Palmer West and Jonah Smith, co-presidents/producers; Alison MacDonald West, creative executive; Jesse Johnston, head of development; Brian Costello, finishing fund and new media coordinator; and Najeeb Rassie, story editor.

When and why did Thousand Words come into being?

Thousand Words has been in existence for nearly two years now. The company was started to be a producing and financial outlet for creative storytellers.

The driving philosophy behind Thousand Words is . . .

The company's mission is to help finance and produce projects led by innovative and daring directors with a good story to tell. Our philosophy on a daily basis is to be the protective shield for our directors, as well as the strong hand within the industry when it is necessary. We are able to do more for our directors since our means of financing are secure and void of a "bank board." This allows us to roll the dice on projects that others may find too risky.

How many projects do you have in various stages of production?

Ideally, we'd like to have five projects in development, and about four projects in various forms of production a year. Our first film, Rob Schmidt's *Saturn,* represents the types of films that need a finishing fund to exist. Even though we fully financed this movie, it harnesses the fearless story-telling aspects we look for in our finishing fund. Most recently, we are preparing the marketing strategy for *Requiem for a Dream*, which will be released by Artisan Entertainment this fall. We are currently in the midst of a lengthy animation-intensive postproduction on *Waking Life*. We have our largest project to date nearing preproduction, and plan to shoot an additional film this summer with a first-time writer/director by the name of Michael Mabbott. We like to keep stories progressing on the sidelines, but we do not believe in optioning more material than we can handle. There are many writers and directors that get caught up in development with no end in sight. We are very aggressive with our projects, and when they are ready to go, we have the financial ability to make things happen quickly.

How did you acquire these outside projects (*Saturn*, along with *Waking Life* and *Requiem For a Dream*)?

We got involved with *Requiem* because Thousand Words' co-president Jonah Smith was actually a co-executive producer on Darren's first film, π, and they needed some financial assistance to get the deal finished with Artisan. Both *Saturn* and *Waking Life* were brought to us by the filmmakers' attorneys. The talent agencies wield a very powerful position in our industry. They have the material and reserve it for those they believe will make it happen for their clients. This is very admirable, but as a new company it is difficult to get their attention and their best material, because we are judged by what we have done. Hopefully this will change in the future, and the doors will open to more agencies. However, until then we continue to take no idea for granted, regardless of its source.

What made you decide to fund projects in the postproduction phase?

We are aware first-hand how difficult it is to raise money for independent filmmaking and we recognize and respect this passion for storytelling against all odds. Filmmakers have a knack for survival and have little fear that their work will not be finished. It is common practice to use all means possible to get the process started and build a film in stages. Postproduction is the toughest stage to raise money for because there is little glamour in an editing room. However, we see the passion in these young filmmakers and look to aid them in this project as well as their next, if all goes well.

What distinguishes Thousand Words from other funders and from other companies (like Next Wave Films) who provide finishing funds?

The difference we bring to the table is the ability to cultivate talent and grow with the filmmakers. If we help a young director finish their first project, we ask to be first on board both financially and as producers to help them with their next project. The Finishing Fund is a good-will arm of the company that hopefully will pay dividends by being the first to support an unknown talent as they gain momentum in the industry.

What qualifies a project for Thousand Words Finishing Funds? What types of projects do you seek to fund?

This is a difficult question to answer because of the wide array of material we are willing to look at. For feature films, we look for a strong story that separates itself from the pack—there has to be something that makes each film different in the market place. We do not choose to support films that are trying to be a studio film on a small

COURTESY THOUSAND WORDS FINISHING FUND

budget. The gift of independent filmmaking is the ability to look at something we all may have seen before through a different set of filters. We do not shy away from risky material. If we see something special in a filmmaker, we will assist in finishing the project even if we see the selling aspect to be a difficult one. We invest our time and effort in people and their stories, not just in their individual films. We have expanded our Finishing Fund parameters to include documentaries and short films as well.

How many applications have you received so far?
Since we launched the fund last January, we've received close to 50 applications.

How many projects do you plan to award with the fund and what is the estimated dollar amount per project?
I love this question because there is no answer. We do not have a mandate or desire to use this fund for a certain preconceived number of projects. We have also been asked for financial assistance from as low as $500 to $500,000. If a project warrants our involvement, we will do whatever we can to see that the project is finished in the proper manner. We help finish films, period, whatever that takes. If one film took all of the fund money, we would simply start a new fund within a week or two.

What can finishing funds be used for?
Ultimately, the fund can be used for anything related to postproduction: editing, blow-ups, ADR, music rights, etc. Ideally, we'd like the fund to go to actual postproduction needs rather than bailing out production debts.

How involved do you get when you award a film finishing funds? If you get further involved, does the film become a Thousand Words picture?
We will use our resources to get the best deals within the film community for the filmmakers. We have many silent partners in the postproduction world that know we bring large features to them on a regular basis. Most want to assist us in the smaller ventures we take to them so as to maintain the relationship. Our credits and control depends on the level of our financial commitment. We are very flexible and are willing to work with the filmmakers and the other financiers to come up with something that works. However we do want to be in control of all festival activity and the sale if the opportunity presents itself. But again, this is a good will arm of our company, primarily in place to scout new talent that we would like to continue to work with.





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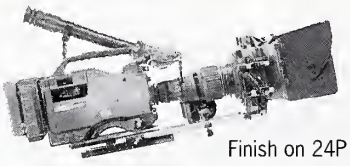
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FUNDER FAQ

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines for the Finishing Fund.
Our fund has no deadline.

Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used?
There is no time frame whatsoever. We are committed to spending this money.

Who makes the awards decisions?
Jonah and I have the final say in the matter of who gets the finishing funds. It is up to us to decide if the talented person presenting their film is right for the company to grow with. Brian, who runs the day-to-day operations of the fund, has the most important role: to lobby on behalf of the filmmakers that he feels are best suited for our fund.

What advice do you have for filmmakers in putting forth a strong application?
Presentation is everything. We do not have deadlines, so the filmmakers should not feel rushed through the application process. Take the time to explain to us why this project is special. You are the visionary; explain that vision clearly.

What is the most common mistake you've seen applicants make thus far?
In the words of Brian Costello: "Dot your i's and cross your t's!" Seriously though, oftentimes people will call me or send in applications that go right to the amount of money needed without really taking the time to present their film's story. The story is the most important part. If we get on board with the narrative, then the money can be figured out as we progress."

What would people most be surprised to learn about Thousand Words and/or its founders?
The fact that the mean age in the company is 26.

Other production assistance programs or grantmaking organizations you admire.
Next Wave Films are very strong, and they have a built-in distribution outlet with IFC (Independent Film Channel) as their sponsor. I think the Minnesota Independent Film Fund from the IFP/North (*featured in the May 2000 issue, ed.*) is a great plan. Search Party's development/production program is interesting. We also admire the Northwest Film and Video Center in Portland, Oregon and Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco.

Famous last words . . .
"If it isn't on the page, it won't make it to the screen."

Funder FAQ profiles a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (SEPT. 1 FOR NOV. ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: SCOTT@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

CINEQUEST FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 22-March 4, CA. Deadlines: Oct 13 (short); Oct. 27 (feature). Founded in 1990, "Maverick Filmmaking" is annual theme of fest, which showcases an eclectic mix of indie films. Competitive for features, docs & shorts. Indie features & shorts of artistic, social or stylistic merit eligible. Awards: Maverick Spirit Award & New Film Funding Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, digital video, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: Cinequest, Mike Rabehl, Programming, Box 720040, San Jose, CA 95172; (408) 995-5033; fax: 995-5713; sjfilmfest@aol.com; www.cinequest.org

CINEVEGAS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 28-Dec. 2, NV. Deadline: Oct. 1. Now accepting short films only for competition in the following cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation. Must be less than 40 min. in total running time. Awards: Best Director, Best Cinematography, Audience Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, digital video, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $50; $25 (students). Contact: CVIFF, Attn: Dana Miller, Fest Coordinator, 2501 N. Green Valley Pkwy., Ste. 118-D, Henderson, NV 89014; (702) 477-7530; cinevegas@aol.com; www.cinevegas.com

SHORTS SHANGRI LA

Entering its fourth year, New York's Shorts International Film Festival seems to have already carved an admirable niche. The fledgling fest recently received the good news that its winning films will become eligible for Academy Award consideration. Last year's fest boasted 76 films in competition, including strong representation from women filmmakers as well as international entries culled from fifteen countries, including Italy, Ireland, and Venezuela. HBO's Sheila Nevins is also a fan, "This is fast becoming one of the most important festivals around," she says, "One that has an uncanny ability to choose quality films, spot important trends, and cultivate innovative new work." See listing.



Brazilian filmmaker Paolo Machline won Best Drama last year for *A Soccer Story*.

DEEP ELLUM FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 9-12, TX. Deadlines: Sept. 4; Sept. 25 (late). 2nd annual fest seeks to unite, celebrate & cultivate the best & most unique of American & Latino indie film. Cats incl. dramatic, doc, latin comedy, music video, shorts & comedy. Awards: last year fest gave 25,000 feet of film processing to the winner of the "Unfinished Category." Films must have been completed no earlier than Jan. 1999. Entries, as well as accomp. materials, will not be returned & become property of org's archive. All formats accepted. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (feature); $25 (short); $40 ("Unfinished" incl. script competition); late entries add $5. Contact: DEFF, Michael Cain/ Melina McKinnon, 2622 Commerce St., Dallas, TX 75226; (214) 752-6759; fax: 752-6863; deffest2000@aol.com; www.deepellumfilmfestival.com/

FOOTAGE DANCE FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 21-25, CA. Deadline: Sept. 1. Noncompetitive film program of the Marin Co. Festival of Dance seeks dance films from any year. Films are screened in Berkeley, San Rafael, San Francisco & Los Angeles. Cats: none. All formats accepted. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $15 (plus s.a.s.e.). Contact: FDFF, 1320 Grand Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901; (415) 454-3564; fax: 454-5294; czpepper@pacbell.net; www.marindance.org

HOLLYWOOD BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 14-18, CA. Deadlines: Aug 31 (early); Sept 30 (final). 3rd annual fest brings the work of accomplished & aspiring Black filmmakers to an environment encompassing the mainstream Hollywood community & S. California film-going audiences. Accepting feature-length films, shorts, docs, animation & student films for its competitive program as well as its World Cinema Program which is open to Black filmmakers outside of the continental U.S. Fest also presents Storyteller Competition for screenwriters & an invitational program screening out-of-competition theatrical premieres by Black filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Digi-beta, VHS, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (early); $35 (final). Contact: HBFF, 1620 Centinela Ave., Ste. 204, Inglewood, CA 90302; (310) 348-3942; fax: 348-3949; info@hbff.org; www.hbff.org

OHIO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 7-12, OH. Deadlines: Aug. 15; Sept. 1 (late). Founded in 1994, fest provides a unique networking & exhibition space for indie filmmakers & is a professional arts org. dedicated to supporting, growing & legitimizing indie filmmaking. Fest exhibits works-in-progress, mixed format work (e.g., 16mm w/ accomp. soundtrack on cassette) & work in non-trad mediums (i.e., video & super 8). Accepts feature films & videos, perf art, visual art & installations; all genres. Awards: cash award for Best of the Fest. Formats: 16mm, super 8, VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15 (short); $20 (feature, over 20 min.); late entry fees are double. Contact: OIFF, Annetta Marion & Bernadette Gillota, Exec. Directors, 1121 Clark Ave., Cleveland, OH 44109; ph/fax: (216) 781-1755; ohioindiefilmfest@juno.com; www.ohiofilms.com

PACIFIC COAST FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-14, CA. Deadlines: Aug. 15; Aug. 30 (late, AIVF members only). Fest held in the beautiful beach community of Del Mar in S. Calif. & features short films by indie filmmakers from U.S. & around the world. Winners are selected by the audience. Cats incl. best short, student, animation. Awards: 1st Prize in each category & Best of Fest. Format: 16mm, 35mm, BetaSP, 3/4" SP, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25; $35 (late). Contact: PCFF, Jeffrey Lehmann, 1155 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, CA 92014; fax: (858) 755-8585; films@bptv.com; www.bptv.com

PINK BUBBLE BATH, Nov., CA. Deadline: Oct. 1; Oct. 15 (late). Fest seeks non-gratuitous sexy films from around the world. Post-fest screenings held in NYC, Detroit & Miami. All cats accepted. Awards: Audience Favorite & Jury Favorite; prizes of production services & sponsor pkgs. Films must be no longer than 30 min. in length. Formats: Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20; $25 (late). Contact: PBB, O. Perez, 800 3/4 Lucile Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90026; (323) 906-9447; o.perez@pinkbubblebath.com; www.pinkbubblebath.com

PXL THIS VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 17; Feb. 16, CA. Deadline: Aug. 22. Founded in '91, fest features videos produced using (but not exclusively) Fisher Price PXL 2000, a toy camera avail. from 1987-89. Two public screenings in LA per fest, w/ 2 hr. long programs span many genres, incl. doc, poetry, exp, drama, comedy & music. Formats: VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: PTVF, Gerry Fialka, Clap Off They Glass Prod., 2427 1/2 Glyndon Ave., Venice, CA 90291; (310) 306-7330; www.rowan.edu/~cassidy/pixel/index.html

SAINT LOUIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 29-Nov. 7, MO. Deadline: Aug 21; Sept. 10 (late). Fest brings together American indies, horizon-expanding int'l films & mainstream studio films to audiences prior to commercial release. Features must be director's 1st or 2nd full-length work to be eligible for Emerging Filmmaker Award. Cats: short, doc, feature, animation. Awards: Cash & non-cash prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (features); $15 (shorts, under 45 min.); $50 (all late films). Contact: SLIFF, 55 Maryland Plaza, Ste. A, St. Louis, MO 63108; (314) 454-0042; fax: 454-0540; info@sliff.org; www.sliff.org

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 8-15, CA. Deadline: Oct. 6. Noncompetitive fest is the largest & most prominent showcase for works from Asian America & Asia w/ 80-100 works shown. Fest is "lively venue for filmmakers, industry & Asian communities" worldwide. Extensive local coverage by media, industry press. Also special events, panels, installations, galas. Fest sponsored by Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Assoc. (NAATA). Cats: feature, experimental, short, animation, doc, mixed genre. Formats: 3/4", Beta SP, 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: SFI AAFVF, Chi-hui Yang, Exhibition Dir., NAATA, 346 9th St., 2nd fl, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; festival@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org/festival

SAN FRANCISCO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL (a.k.a. SF IndieFest), Jan. 11-21, CA. Deadline: Oct. 1. 3rd annual fest seeks features & shorts to compete for Audience Awards for best feature, best short, best animation & prize awarded to the IndieFest Staff Favorite. Films eligible for planned traveling festival of N. CA campuses in Jan. & Feb. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, mini-DV, Beta SP, DVD, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Entry form avail. on web site. Contact: SF IndieFest, 530 Divisadero St., #183, San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 707-2876; sfindie@sirius.com; www.sfindie.com

SHORTS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 11-15, NY. Deadline: Sept. 15. Now in 4th yr., fest aims "to put shorts back on the map" & boasts advisory board incl. the Coen bros., Susan Seidelman & Ang Lee. Fest held in Manhattan at

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Loews Worldwide Cineplex; winning films will tour Loews theaters nationwide. Cats: animation, comedy, doc, drama, experimental & student. Length: 40 min. or less. Films must be completed after Jan 1999. Awards: Grand Prize of $2,000 to winning director in each cat. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: SIFF. Lisa Walborsky, 9 Desbrosses St., 2nd fl., NYC 10013 (212) 905-2397; fax: 905-2389; info@shorts.org; www.shorts.org

SLAMDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 20-27, CA. Deadlines: Oct 11 (early); Nov 8 (final); Anarchy online section has year-round rolling deadline. Started by 3 filmmakers in 1995, fest's primary objective is to present new indie films by new filmmakers. Fest runs concurrent w/ Sundance Film Festival & takes place in the heart of Park City, Utah. Fest shows features, shorts, docs, foreign features, animation, video, digital, streaming. Awards: $70,000 worth of prizes awarded last year for jury & audience awards. Films showcased attract industry interest & several have received distrib. & agency rep. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, VHS, DVD, streaming. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20-$55. Contact: Slamdance, Peter Baxter, Dir., 6381 Hollywood Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; mail@slamdance.com; www.slamdance.com

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 18-28, UT. Early deadlines: feature, Aug 4. (notification Sept. 15). Final deadlines: short, Sept. 29; feature, Oct. 6. Founded in 1985 to "recognize independent filmmaking in all of its diversity," Sundance is the premiere U.S. competitive showcase for new ind. films. Showcase for domestic & int'l films, incl. competition of new American ind. feature films, non-competitive program of both new American ind. and foreign feature films & shorts. Dramatic & doc entries must have significant U.S. financing & be completed no earlier than Oct. of 1998. Running time no less than 70 min. (drama); no less than 50 min. for doc. For competition, entries may not open theatrically before Feb. 1 of yr. of fest in more than 3 N. American markets or be broadcast nationally. Competition entries may not play in any domestic film fest prior to Sundance. Films may play in up to 2 foreign fests. Films produced, financed or initiated by major motion picture studio not eligible for comp.; however, any film conforming to above guidelines & produced, financed or initiated by ind. division of studio, or purchased by studio after completion is eligible. Foreign feature films (less than 50% U.S. financed) not eligible for comp., but may be submitted for fest screening consideration & must be subtitled in English. One rep of each comp. film will be invited to attend as fest's guest. Ind feature film competition awards Grand Prize, Cinematography Award & Audience Award (popular ballot). Other awards: in dramatic cat, Screenwriters Award; in doc cat, Freedom of Expression Award. Films selected for comp. become eligible for inclusion in Sundance Int'l Show. American films selected in short film cat eligible for special award. Other special programs have incl. Latin American section & World Cinema. About 200 works selected for each fest & large audience of 75,000 incl. major distributors, programmers, journalists, critics & agents. Int'l press coverage extensive. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, digital video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20-$50. Fest's admin. address: Sundance Inst., Box 3630, Salt Lake City, UT 84110. Contact: SFF, Geoffrey Gilmore, Dir. of Programming/John Cooper, Assoc. Dir. Programming, 8857 West Olympic Blvd., Ste. 200, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (310) 360-1981; fax: 360-1969; programming@sumdance.org; www.sundancefilm.com; www.sundance.org

WILLIAMSBURG BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, May, NY. Deadline: Oct. 15; Jan. 15 (late). 4th annual fest incl. Q&A sessions, panel discussions & live broadcast over the Internet. Cats: feature, experimental, doc, short. Awards: Grand Chameleon Award ($30,000 in services); winners in each category will be awarded the Chameleon statuette. Formats: All formats accepted. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15; $40 (late). Contact WBFF, Marco Ursino, fest dir., 180 South 4th St., Ste. 2 S., Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-4306; fax: 599-5039; marco@wbff.org; www.wbff.org

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 17-26, IL. Deadline: Sept. 15. 20th annual fest is the largest & longest running women's film/video fest in U.S. Last year's 10-day fest incl. over 120 outstanding works from women directors around the world, int'l guest artists, diverse programming from an inter-generational queer women's video workshop to a hip-hop extravaganza. Films & videos of all genres directed by women (collaboration okay) since 1999 eligible. Cats: Any style or genre. Formats: 3/4", 16mm, VHS, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30; $20 (WIDC members). Contact: WIDCFVF, Sabrina Craig, Program Dir., 941 W. Lawrence, #500, Chicago, IL 60640; (773) 907-0610; fax: 907-0381; widc@widc.org; www.widc.org

Foreign

$100 FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 16-19, Canada. Deadline: Sept. 30. 9th annual fest encourages new & experienced filmmakers to make "shoot from the hip" exp shorts. Entries outside Canada should label packages: "Cultural Purposes. No Commercial Value." Awards: Cash awards: $500-$1,000. Formats: super 8, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: $100FF, Calgary Society of Filmmakers, Box 23177 Connaught P.O., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2S 3B1; (403) 205-4747; fax: 237-5838; info@csif.org; www.csif.org

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL CINEMA, Oct. 29-Nov. 2, Canada. Deadline: Sept. 1. Fest, now in 19th yr., programs over 80 short, medium & feature-length films. Past editions have incl. films from over 20 countries. All types of films, incl. fiction, doc, & animation, accepted. All entries must've been completed after Jan. 1st of preceding yr. & not shown commercially in Canada. Awards: Grand Prix Hydro-Québec to best in competition; Prix Télébec to best short or medium length feature ($1,000 prize); Prix Animé to best animation film in competition. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS or DVD. No entry fee. Contact: ATFIC, Jacques Matte, Dir., 215 Ave. Mercier, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, Canada J9X 5W8; (819) 762-6212; fax: 762-6762; fciat@sympatico.ca; www.telebec.qc.ca/fciat

AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND MARKET, Nov. 10-19, France. Deadline: Sept. 6. Competitive showcase focuses on films exploring cultural identity, minority groups & ethnic issues w/ emphasis on little-known cinema & int'l multicultural film. Cats: features, shorts, fiction or doc films addressing identity of a people or ethnic minority, racism, or issues of representation & differences eligible. In competition, entries must have been completed btwn Sept. of previous yr. & Oct. of yr. of edition & be unshown in France. Awards: Grand Prix to best feature (fiction—50,000 FF, approx. $7,270, to promote French distrib. of the Grand Prix), Jury award, Grand Prix to best short. Fest incl. retros, panoramas & tributes to a director & a country. Programs this yr: cinema of Native Peoples; 15 x 15, the European Heritage; tributes to directors Jaime H. Hermosillo (Mexico), James Coburn (U.S.), Claire Denis (France) & Hanna Schygula (Germany). Formats:

35mm, 16mm, Beta (for docs). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: AIFFM, Jean-Pierre Garcia, artistic dir., MCA Place Léon Gontier, 80,000 Amiens, France; 011 33 3 22 71 35 70; fax: 33 3 22 92 53 04; amiensfilmfestival@burotec.fr

AUTRANS INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN AND ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, Dec., France. Deadline: Sept. 30. Competitive fest, open to professional & non-pro filmmakers, looks for films that "contribute positively to knowledge on the one hand of the snow & ice world & the other to developing & exalting human resources in adventure & evasion." Entries may incl. snow & ice films, sporting & sports teaching films, social life & ethnology films, etc. Entries should have been completed in previous 4 yrs. Awards: Grand Prix d'Autrans (15,000FF, approx. $2,180); Best Film in six separate cats (5,000FF, $727) Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta SP, VHS, DigiBeta, all non NTSC video. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: AIMAFF, Secretariat General, Office du Tourisme, Autrans (Vercors), France 38880; 011 33 4 76 95 30 70 ; fax: 33 4 76 95 38 63; autrans@alpes-net.fr

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 3-5, Canada. Deadlines: Sept. 8 (entry confirm.); Sept. 15 (receipt of film). Now in 25th yr., fest is juried int'l film competition seeking out best films & videos on mountains & their spirit of adventure. Entries compete in 6 cats: Grand Prize ($4,000); Best Short Mountain Film; Best Feature-Length Mtn. Film; Best Films on Climbing, on Mtn. Sports, on Mtn. Environment, on Mtn. Culture; People's Choice Award ($2,000 each, all amounts Cdn.). Winning films become part of int'l tour, for which producers are paid fee. Entries can be any duration, either narrative or story form, animated or exp art form. Fest situated in heart of the Cdn. Rockies & is one of largest of its kind in world featuring int'l guest speakers, adventure trade fair, mtn. craft sale, climbing wall, seminars on mtn. subjects & attracting auds. of over 10,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $50 (Cdn). Contact: BMFF, Jodi McDonald, Banff Centre for Mtn. Culture, Box 1020, Stn. 38, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0; (403) 762-6441; fax: 762-6277; CMC@BanffCentre.ab.ca; www.banffcentre.ab.ca/CMC/

BREST SHORT FILM FESTIVAL Nov. 11-19, France. Deadline: Sept. 5. Competition open to fiction short films produced/co-produced by an EU country. Max running time 60 min., completed after June 1, 1999 (Copyright 1999 & 2000). Approx. 48 films accepted for competition & about 30 films incl. in "fringe" screenings outside competition. Awards: Grand Prix; 1st Film Award; Audience Award; Best Actress/Actor Award. Formats: 35mm or 16mm w/ optical soundtrack, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BSFF, Gilbert Le Traon & Mirabelle Fréville, artistic dir., Assoc. Côte Ouest, 40 rue de la République (Porte 5), B.P. 173, 29269 Brest cedex, France; 011 33 2 98 44 03 94; fax: 33 2 98 80 25 24; film-festival@brest.com; www.film-festival.brest.com

CABBAGETOWN SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 8, Canada. Deadline: Aug: 18. Fest, held as past of Toronto's Cabbagetown Festival, accepting works under 15 min. Cats: feature, doc, exp., anim. Formats: VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: CSFVF, Old Cabbagetown Business Improv. Office, 237 Carlton St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 2L2; (416) 921-0857; fax: 921-8245; www.oldcabbagetown.com

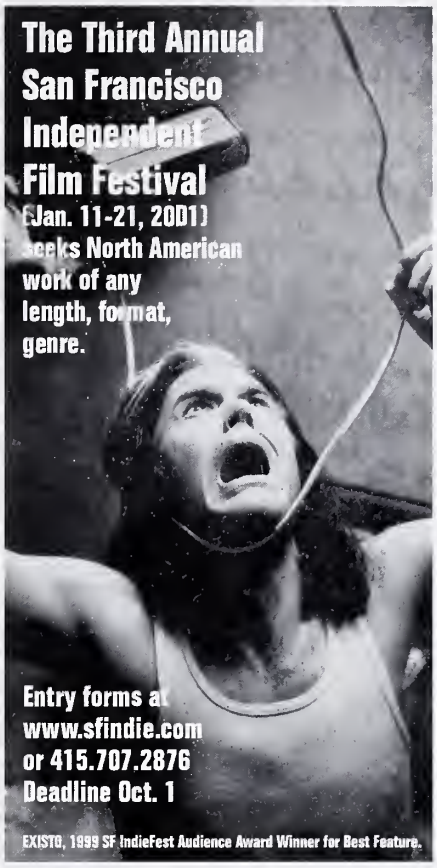
CLERMONT-FERRAND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 26-Feb. 3, France. Deadline: Oct. 16. Fest presents major int'l competition w/ over 50 countries represented. Int'l competition provides spectacular view of worldwide cinematographic creation, screening over 70 films w/ audiences of over 125,000. Cats: feature, doc, animation, experimental, short. Entries must be 40 min. or less & completed after Jan. 1 of preceding yr. Directors invited to fest for 8 days; hotel accomm. & food allowance paid, plus 500FF (approx. $72), toward travel. Fest also hosts short film market w/ large catalog listing over 2,600 prods. Several buyers have participated over the yrs, incl. Channel 4, Canal+, ZDF, BBC, YLE, La Sept-Arté, France 2; 2,000 professionals attend. 25 video units avail. to buyers for viewing approx 2,600 tapes of shorts. Awards incl. Grand Prix 20,000 FF ($2,910), to director & Vercingétorix award), Special Jury Prize & audience choice 25,000 FF ($3,635), & Vercingétorix to director. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: CFISFF, Roger Gonin, Fest Dir., La Jetée, 6 place Michel-de-l'Hospital, 63058 Clermont Ferrand Cedex, France; 011 33 4 73 91 65 73; fax: 33 4 73 92 11 93; info@clermont-filmfest.com; www.clermont-filmfest.com

COREOGRAFO ELECTRONICO COMPETITION, Nov., Italy. Deadline: Sept. Accepts pro works on video regarding dance. Cats incl: recording of dance shows, films about dance, TV docs. Awards: Cash prizes. Formats: VHS, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: 100,000 lire (approx. $50, paid directly into Italian bank acct. on entry form avail. on web site). Contact: Il Coreografo Elettronico/Napolidanza, Via S. Liborio 1, Napoli, Italy 80135; tel/fax: 011 39 81 5422157; napolidanza@vesuvio.synapsis.it; www.napoli.com/napolidanza

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM INDEPENDENT, Nov. 7-12, Belgium. Deadline: Sept. 15. Founded in 1978, competitive fest began as showcase for super 8 film, now open to all formats in super 8, video, 16mm & 35mm. 60+ countries participate. Fest welcomes many different disciplines, incl. painting, photos, sculpture, performances by artists & workshops on new technologies, plus retros, computer animation, video dance & short films. Entries must not have been broadcast in world premiere. Cats: animation, doc, feature, short. Awards incl. cash prizes for Best Director, Best Doc, Best Scenario, Special Jury Award & Prize of Tomorrow's Cinema. Special Competition "Filmed Creation of Deaf People," for films made by deaf directors. Each yr. a new country is spotlighted & special programs are set up by different countries. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 1/2", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: FIFI, Christophe Evrard, Rue Paul Emile Janson 12 , B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium; 011 322 649 3340; fax: 322 649 3340; centre.multimedia@euronet.be

FLICKERFEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 4-10, Australia. Deadline: Oct. 2. In its 10th yr., Australia's premiere short film fest is competitive & open to any film or video production under 60 min. Cats: fiction, doc, animation. Awards: Best Film, $2,000 AUD (approx $1,175); Best Animation, $1,250 AUD ($735); Best Doc, $1,000 AUD ($590). Fest incl. int'l short & doc market. Entries must be on film for competition (Beta SP accepted for docs) & be in English or have English subtitles. Preference given to films completed w/in last 2 yrs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS (PAL). Entry fee: $25 AUD (approx. $15) + extra for tape return. Contact: FISFF, Box 7416, Bondi Beach, Australia 2026; 011 61 2 9365 6877; fax: 61 2 9365 6899; flickerfest@bigpond.com; www.flickerfest.com.au

HAVANA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA, Dec. 5-15, Cuba. Deadline: Sept. 15. Fest is world's largest showcase of Latin Amer. & Caribbean film/video w/ 400 int'l productions showcased each yr. & 500,000 spectators. Entries may be made by non-Latin Amer. filmmakers subtitled in Spanish. Also screenings at several cin-





ema & video venues, retros & seminars. Cats: fiction, doc, anim., editing, acting, script, photo, sound & design. Awards: Coral Award to best films/videos contributing to Latin Amer. cultural identity; Best unproduced script. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Contact: HIFNLAC, Iván Giroud, ICAIC Int'l Film Distribs., Calle 23 No. 1155, Havana, Cuba; 011 53 7 552841/552849; fax: 53 7 334273/333078; festival@icaic.inf.cu; www.cinelatinoamericano.com

HUY WORLD FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, Oct., Belgium. Deadline: Early Sept. Founded in 1961, fest is open to ind. short films under 30 min. completed since April of preceding yr. About 50-60 films selected for exhib. w/ special program for students. Awards: 3 Grand Prix to 35mm prods.; cash prizes up to $7,000; Gold, Silver & Bronze Medals in each cat w/ 10 special prizes. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15. Contact: HWFSF, Roger Closset, Pres., 5 rue Nokin, 4520 Wanze (Huy), Belgium; ph./fax: 011 32 85 21 78 29.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF AUTEUR FILM, Nov. 23-30, Yugoslavia. Deadline: Oct. 15. 7th annual fest's aim is to present films made by authors/directors w/ their own view into the world & human life. Fest intends to be a gathering of int'l film directors; offering an ideal opportunity to encourage promotion & commercial distrib. of selected works. Awards: Aleksandar Petrovic Award. Incl. w/ preview: one dialogue list in English or French, photo of director, short film description & short filmography/bio for catalog & press, plus a few B&W or color stills. Formats: 35mm, 16mm (main program); Beta SP or VHS (PAL) (video program). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: FAF, Jugoslavia Film, Makedonska 22, 11000, Belgrade, Yugoslavia; 011 324 8282/322 0319; fax: 381 11 324 8659; jugofilm@yugofilm.org; www.yufilm.org/auto

LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR DOCUMENTARY AND ANIMATED FILM, Oct. 17-22, Germany. Deadline: Sept. 1. Under theme "Films of the World-For Human Dignity," this fest, funded in 1956, is one of older int'l competitive events focusing on doc form. Sections incl. Int'l Competition, special programs & retros. Competition incl. cinema or TV doc films of all genres, productions on video (doc & animation films) & animation films. Awards incl. Golden & Silver Doves, Ecumenical Jury Prize, FIPRESCI Jury Prize, Sparkassen Prize. Entries for competition or info programs must not have been shown in public prior to June 1 of preceding yr. About 230 productions showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: LIFDAF, Dokfestival Leipzig, GroBe Fleischergasse 11, 04109 Leipzig, Germany; 011 49 341 9 80 39 21; fax: 49 341 9 80 61 41; dok-leipzig @t-online.de; www.dokfestival-leipzig.de

MIPCOM INT'L FILM & PROGRAMME MARKET FOR TV, VIDEO, CABLE & SATELLITE, Oct. 2-6, France. Deadline: Early Sept. Over 10,000 entertainment professionals, representing approx. 100 countries (incl. 2,500 buyers & 1,200 exhibitors) participate in market, held in Cannes, which is one of world's major markets for programming industry. Producers, distribs., journalists, broadcasters & buyers conduct business annually. Market is meeting place for buying & selling program rights & setting up co-production agreements & joint ventures. MIPCOM provides hotel reservations, welcome & transport services, parties, club for participants w/ stands, int'l press services, law center, seminars & special events planning. Also publishes guide to participants (cross referenced by country, branch of industry & key executives), pre-news detailing major market events, a daily newspaper & billboards. It is possible to participate w/out stand—13,650 FF, approx. $2,000, entry fee covers entrance for 3 employees, use of participants club & listing in MIPCOM guide. Contact: MIPCOM, Jacques Gibout, Int'l Sales Dir., Reed Miden Org., BP 572, 11 Rue du Colonel Pierre Avia, 75726 Paris Cedex 15, France; 011 33 1 41 90 45 80; fax: 33 1 41 90 45 70; U.S. contact: Barney Bernhard, President TV Sales, Reed Midem Org., 125 Park Ave., 24th fl., New York, NY 10017; (212) 370-7470; fax: 370-7471

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AND VIDEOS ON ART, March 13-18, Canada. Deadline: Oct. 10. In its 19th yr., fest is competitive for productions related to arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, design, crafts, fashion, decorative arts, museology, restoration, photography, cinema (profiles of directors & actors, film shoots, special effects), literature, dance, music, theater. Fest not designed for exp. film or video but for productions on art-related subjects. Features & shorts accepted. Sections: Creative Crossroads (competition); Trajectories (panorama of recent films & videos); Focus (tribute to noted producer, filmmaker or distrib.); Reflections (films & videos by artists); Artificial Paradise (films & videos related to cinema as art form, i.e. profiles of producers, directors, actors, etc.); Time Recaptured (archival films, late artists, annivs.). Entries in comp. must've been completed in 3 yrs. preceding fest; no date restrictions on other sections. Awards: Grand, Jury, Creativity, Best Portrait, Best Essay, Best Film for TV, Best Media Work, Best Edu Film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: $25; $35 (Canada & other countries). Contact: MIFFVA, René Rozon, 640 St. Paul St. W, Ste. 406, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 1L9; (514) 874-1637; fax: 874-9929; admin@artfifa.com; www.artfifa.com

RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 15-19, Canada. Deadline: Sept 15. Fest presents features & shorts on the realities & myths surrounding mental health/mental illness & addiction. Each night focuses on a different theme w/ panel discussions involving filmmakers, artists & people w/ professional & personal experience w/ mental illness &/or addiction. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, super 8, VHS, Beta, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: RWMFF, Lisa Brown, Workman Theatre Project, 1001 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6J 1H4; (416) 583-4339; fax: 583-4354; rendez-vous@sympatico.ca; www.rendezvouswithmadness.com

SEOUL INTERNATIONAL LABOR VIDEO AND FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 16-19. Deadline: Sept. 30. Annual non-competitive fest seeks works on labor movement & working people's lives regardless of any style. This year's main themes are int'l struggle against globalization, labor media, women workers & int'l solidarity, but any work on labor issues welcome. Fest is hosted by Labor News Prod. & sponsored by Korean Film Commission (KBC) & Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). Formats: any. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SILVFF, Myoung Joon Kim; 011 82 11 270 7150; fax: 82 2 882 9611; LNP89@chollian.net

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 9-19, Sweden. Deadline: Sept. 8. Fest promotes new & inventive filmmaking by up & coming directors as well as giving a survey of the current world's film situation. Cats incl. feature & short film competitions, Amer. indies, Asian Images, Twilight Zone (genre, cult & underground), Spotlight, and Collage (docs, TV & exp.). Awards incl. Bronze Horse for Best Feature Film, Aluminium Horse for Best Short, Best Actor/Actress, Best Script, Best DP, Best 1st Feature. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 70mm, Beta SP (PAL). Preview on VHS (PAL, NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: SIFF, Coordinator, Box 3136, SE-103 62, Stockholm, Sweden 011 46 8 677 50 00; fax: 46 8 20 05 90; program@cinema.se; www.filmfestivalen.se

TBILISI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 16-22, Georgia. Deadline: Aug. 15. 1st annual fest, held as part of the Georgian Int'l Festival of Arts, celebrates 100 yrs. of Georgian cinema. Films dealing w/ problems of young people, showing the life of the new generation, selected for Int'l Competition. Sections also incl. non-competitive Forum, concerts, workshops, wine tastings. Films must be at least 60 min. in length & completed after 1/1/98. Awards: Prometheus Award $2,500; jury prize $1,500. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: TIFF, 8, Mardjanishvili St., 380002 Tbilisi, Georgia; tel/fax: 011 995 32 940090; gift@osgf.ge

THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-19, Greece. Deadline: Sept. 30. Now in 41st year, fest of new trends in world cinema is also Balkans' primary showcase for work of young & emerging filmmakers. Fest targets new filmmakers & showcases innovative, int'l indie films. Sections incl. Int'l Competition for 1st or 2nd features; Retros; New Horizons. Info section & number of special events, galas, etc. All participating films should be nat'l premieres. Awards: Golden Alexander (approx. $50,000) & Silver Alexander (approx. $30,000). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: TIFF, Michel Demopoulos, dir., 40 Paparigopoulou St., Athens 11473, Greece; 011 30 1 645 3669; fax: 30 1 644 8143; info@filmfestival.gr; U.S. contact: Valerie Kontakos, One Art Prod., 140 5th Ave, NY, NY 10011; (212) 929 4230; fax: 741-5898

TOULON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MARITIME AND SEA EXPLORATION FILMS, Oct 11-17, France. Deadline: Sept. 7. 32nd annual competitive fest is a meeting place for sailors, underwater divers, explorers & adventure filmmakers. Entries (feature or short & produced w/in previous 3 yrs) must be about the sea or exploration (oceanology, archaeology, history, etc). Awards incl. Golden Anchor, French Navy Prize, Audience Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: 500 FF (approx. $72). Contact: TIFMSEF, Baudouin Varennes, Chief Comm. Officer, Secretariat, 14, rue Peiresc, 83000 Toulon, France; 011 33 494 92 99 22; fax: 33 494 91 35 65; festi.film@wanadoo.fr; www.fifme.com

VERZAUBERT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 15-Dec. 6, Germany. Deadline: Sept. 15. 10th annual event is the "most successful gay & lesbian film festival in Europe," presenting about 70 features & short prods. in 5 different German cities: Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Cologne & Berlin. Cats: feature, short. Awards: Cash prize of $5,000 awarded to best feature; $1,000 to best short film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee ($25 for return of tape). Contact: VFF, Schorsch Muller, Rosebud Entertainment Veranstaltungs und Medien GmbH, Fregestr. 36, 12161 Berlin, Germany; 011 49 30 861 4532; fax: 49 30 861 4539; rosebud_entertainment @t-online.de; www.queer-view.com/verzaubert

VOLADERO INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 17-19, Mexico. Deadlines: Sept. 15 (early); Sept. 29 (final). Voladero Film Workshop invites films under 30 minutes, shot on 35mm, 16 mm or video and completed on or after Jan. 1 1999 to participate in its first festival & the first int'l festival for Monterrey, Mexico's most important industrial city. Cats: fiction narrative, animation, doc & experimental. Awards will be given for each category. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Betacam SP, VHS. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Incl. entry form (avail. online) production stills & director's bio info. Entry fees: $25 (early); $35 (final). Contact: VIFVF, Jose Galino, Padre Mier 1099 Ote, Barrio Antiguo, Monterrey, N.L. Mexico 64000; 011 52 8 343 0252; fax: 52 8 343 3501; festival@ voladero.com; www.voladero.com

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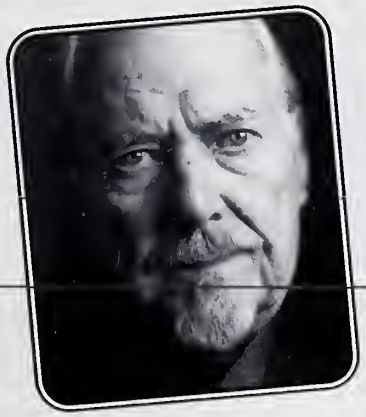
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COMPETITIONS

BAD KITTY FILMS SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Dedicated to advancement of new, innovative writers through hard work, promotion, networking & lots of good Karma. Scripts must be unsold/unoptioned at time of entry, narrative (not doc) & of following lengths: Full-length (80-125 pg. max.); short subject (15-30 pages). Awards: Grand Prizes (feature cat) $300 cash, Award of Achievement, consideration for option & development by Bad Kitty Films & intro to one of Hollywood's top writing agents; (short subject cat) $100 cash, Award of Achievement & assistance w/ shopping film in specialized markets. All finalists receive Award of Achievement. All entrants eligible to receive copies of script coverage. Entry fee: $45. Deadline: Aug. 31. For all guidelines: Bad Kitty Films Screenplay Competition, 2431 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (408)-642-MEOW; fax: 723-7378; info@badkittyfilms.com; www.badkittyfilms.com

BIG AUSTRALIAN INT'L SCREENWRITING COMPETITION offers $10,000 cash award plus 2-week trip for 2 to Hawaii or Sydney for winner; 10 other finalists get $1,000 each; 20 semi-finalists each receive in-depth script analysis valued at $150. All scripts are logged online & all contestants will receive a copy of judges' scorecards. Entry fees & deadlines: ; $75 (Aug. 31); $85 (Sept. 30). Call or write: Big Australian Int'l Screenwriting Competition, c/o The Source World Wide Scriptservice Pty Ltd., Box 356 Woollahra N.S.W. 2025, Sydney, Australia; fax: 011 61 2 9326-1483 or 61 7 5538-4465; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/the-big-australian

BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION NATIONAL STUDENT SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION designed to promote & recognize outstanding student scripts in cats of feature, short & TV series. All full- & part-time students, undergraduate or graduate, in U.S. institutions of higher education eligible. Awards: $200 check, software from Screenplay Systems Inc., book from Focal Press. Deadline: Jan. 2001. Broadcast Education Assoc., Dept. of Communications, CA State University, Fullerton, CA 92834; (714) 278-5399; fax: 278-2209; efink@fullerton.edu; www.marquette.edu/bea/write/STU00-COMP.htm

ERIK BARNOUW AWARD recognizes outstanding reporting or programming on network or cable TV, or in doc film concerned w/ American history, the study of American history &/or promotion of history. Only works released in 2000 are eligible for award to be given in 2001. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Erik Barnouw Award, Organization of American Historians, 112 N. Bryan Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408; (812) 855-9852; fax: 855-0696; kara@oah.org

EMPIRE SCREENPLAY CONTEST: Feature-length narrative film projects solicited in two cats: Hollywood or Bust (relatively expensive to produce) & High Value (relatively inexpensive to produce). In keeping w/ main objective of competition—to enhance availability of quality material for Hollywood—contest first solicits proposals for movie projects. After evaluation, completed scripts are requested from writers for those projects deemed to be of interest to producers. Prizes: $2,000 to winner in each category. Deadline (postmark): Aug. 15. Entry fee: ($50). Contact: empirecontact@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/empirecontact

LIVE! NEW! SCRIPTS!

Like 5th Night in New York, Drama Garage's Thursday Night Reading Series in Los Angeles offers screenwriters the opportunity to see their work set free from brad-shackled pages and performed in front of an audience by professional actors. Currently the only series of its kind in L.A., the events are touted as "part industry showcase, part workshop and part debut." In addition to seasoned thespians the program also procures a director, sends out press releases, provides rehearsal/performance space and a post-reading reception, plus a profile and web-streaming of the event on their web site. See listing.



***FADE-IN*: SCREENWRITING AWARDS**: Cash prizes & industry exposure from publishers of *Fade-In* magazine. Entries accepted in 5 cats (comedy, action/adventure, thriller, drama, film noir) & two formats (features, shorts). Scripts must not have been optioned at time of entry or at time material is chosen as finalist. Must be original work of applicant & not based, in whole or part, on another author's work. Awards: Grand Prize: Apple Performa computer, plus expense-paid trip to meet w/ top literary agents & studio execs for 3 days. Prizes in each cat, 1st: $500, Waterman fountain pen, Final Draft software & 1 yr. *Fade-In* subscription; 2nd: $250, script analysis by WGA-credited writer, 1 yr. subscription; 3rd: $100, script analysis by WGA-credited writer, 1 yr. subscription. Entry fee: $40. Deadline: Oct. 30. Contact: *Fade-In* Screenwriting Awards, 289 S. Robertson Blvd. Ste. 465, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (800) 646-3896; www.fadeinmag.com

FILM ESCAPADE: Juried competition seeks shorts & features. Cash prizes. Cats include narrative, doc, anim., exper., music video. Preview formats: VHS, 16mm. Entry fee: $15 (shorts); $20 (features). Deadline: Dec. 10. Send s.a.s.e. to Miller/McCann Film Escapade, Box 54320, Philadelphia, PA 19105; fax: (610) 992-9128; www.filmescapade.freeservers.com; FilmMiller@aol.com; Dziga24@aol.com

FINAL DRAFT INTERNATIONAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: Sponsored by Final Draft software. Entry fee: $55. Deadline: Sept. 30. Ten prize winners. First 5: $10,000, $5,000, $3,000, $2,000, $1,000 plus submission of script to major Hollywood literary agent. Top 3 also get round-trip airfare to L.A. plus 3 nights hotel accom. Next 5 will have scripts submitted to the agent & receive latest version of Final Draft software. info@finaldraft.com; www.finaldraft.com

ONE IN TEN SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: To promote gay & lesbian material in a positive light. Each script must have one primary character that is gay or lesbian, be in English & be between 90-120 pages. Awards: $300 (1st), agency & studio exposure; $200 (2nd) & studio exposure; $100 (3rd) & script software. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: Sept. 1. Send SASE for rules to: Cherub Prod., Box 540, Boulder, CO 80306. Attn: One in Ten Screenplay Competition; (303) 629-3072; CHERUBFILM@aol.com; www.members.aol.com/cherubfilm/

SANTA FE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION 2001, co-founded by screenwriting teacher & author Rick Reichman & award-winning writer/director Larry N. Stouffer, is accepting submissions through Oct. 31. Top 5 awards: $2,000, $1,000, $500, $250, $125; next 15 finalists get $50 each. Top 5 also get free tuition at annual screenwriting conference held in Santa Fe, Memorial Day weekend. Entries receive script critique & notes. Call (505) 424-1501; www.SFeSC.com

WISCONSIN SCREENWRITER'S FORUM: To assist TV & feature writers through education, support & networking. Feature films must be betw. 90-120 pgs. No entries accepted before Sept. 1. Awards: Certificates, special support from the WSF, subscription to journals & newsletters, full tuition to the "Selling to Hollywood" seminar held in Los Angeles. Loglines of top scripts sent to agents, producers & directors. Entry fee: $30 members/$60 non-members (includes 1 year of membership). Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: WSF Screenwriters Contest, Box 11378, Milwaukee, WI 53211; (888) 282-6776; www.execpc.com/~wsf

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

DRAMA GARAGE THURSDAY NIGHT SCRIPT READING SERIES: Monthly script reading at Occidental Studios in L.A. w/ professional director & actors. Writer chosen receives copy of Final Draft software & is interviewed by IntheBiz.net, web site & private networking organization for assistants in entertainment industry to agents & producers. Deadline: monthly. Processing fee: $25. See web site for appl., rules & submission info. Contact: Drama Garage, Thursday Night Script Reading Series, 1861 N. Whitley, Ste. 205, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 993-5700; www.dramagarage.com

SELLING TO HOLLYWOOD—13th annual Screenwriters Conference of American Screenwriters Assoc. Aug. 3-6 at Hilton Glendale, L.A. Contact: ASA Selling to Hollywood Screenwriters Conference, Box 292010, Kettering, OH 45429; (937) 640-2690; fax: (513) 731-9212; info@sellingtohollywood.com; www.sellingtohollywood.com

FILMS & TAPES WANTED

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for 2000 video series, all genres. Submit VHS only, resumé, brief statement & s.a.s.e. for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo, NY cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min. on 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi-8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@pce.net

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for indep. shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to *Bijou Matinee*, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital submissions of 30 min. or less on ongoing basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Artists paid honorarium & will qualify for non-exclusive distribution deals. Looking for short, narrative, alternative, anim., underground works. Works selected may continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings. Submit VHS/or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone no. along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Unable to return submissions. Contact: Blackchair Prods., 2318 2nd Ave., PMP #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre/subject matter. Deadline: ongoing. Send tapes & s.a.s.e. to: The Ind. Film & Video Series, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 5th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018.

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING FILM PROGRAM, hosted by Film Society of Lincoln Center, is currently seeking original films or videos, from 1-20 min., to include w/ monthly screenings of open-captioned featured films at Walter Reade Theater. Films w/ artistic involvement from deaf artists preferred, but not required. Seeking original work that can be understood by deaf audience—dialogue must be subtitled. Send 1/2" video copy to The Film Society of Lincoln Center, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Film Program, 165 W. 65th St., 4th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; sbensman@dti.net

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

FIREWATER FILMS, year-round short film series in NYC seeking short film submissions. Cats: narrative, doc., animation & exp. Films shown on both VHS & 16mm formats at the Big Top Theater. Firewater Films, Box 20039, NY, NY 10025; (212) 414-5419; fax: 724-8190; www.firewaterfilms.com

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, experimental & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218.

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docs &/or works-in-progress for screening consideration & network building. Program sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact Ken Sherman: (212) 601-1021; ken.sherman@makor.org

MUSIC VIDEOS WANTED; Submit original music videos for a super series for the electromagnetic spectrum. Any genre or subject. Amateurs, students & pros welcome. No quality is too bad or too good. Submit VHS tape, email address & s.a.s.e. for return of materials to: Grrrowl Prods., 24 Walker Dr., Belle Mead, NJ 08502; grrrowlproductions@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/grrrowlproductions/

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. long considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature, plus brief Q & A w/ audience. Works over 15 min. considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distrib. of experimental video. Based in Portland, OR, series promotes exp., abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: PP, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

POTHOLE PICTURES: revitalized 450-seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series—a showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length/genre. Connection to New England whether thru subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers helpful but not nec. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com

THE SHORT LIST; showcase for American & int'l short films, airs nat'ly on PBS stations. Pays $100/min. All genres, 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards five Kodak product grants annually to selected series filmmakers. Submit on VHS. For appl., send s.a.s.e. to: Jack Ofield, Dir., The Production Center, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; www.theshortlist.com; ShortList@mail.sdsu.edu

SNACONTT ARTS; Weekly conceptual video art program on Time Warner (public access TV) in Manhattan & Brooklyn is looking for artists' work to show. Contact: Constant, Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; snacontt@aol.com

SPOONTANEOUS COMBUSTION: Open call to ind. artists for Promote Art Works Inc.'s *Spontaneous Combustion* series, airing monthly on Brooklyn Comm. Access TV. All fields; dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater considered. No works-in-progress accepted. Quality videotapes also accepted for editing. Free video recording also available. Call Kathleen at (718) 797-3116.

UNQUOTE TV: Weekly nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative work of all genres. Produced at DUTV-Cable 54 & cablecast nat'ly, Unquote Television is now in its 10th year. Send to: Unquote TV c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. 9B/4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short anim., exper., or doc videos for ongoing screening series. No narrative or works made on film. Currently searching for int'l videos for upcoming series in spring. Send non-returnable VHS tape w/ brief bio & $1 to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, NY, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

WGBH-TV BOSTON is committed to supporting indie filmmakers, incl. those who may never have considered local TV broadcast an option. Looking for top notch indie films & videos to be part of our ongoing local series *Viewpoint*, showcasing works from across New England & around the world. Broadcast works receive honorarium from WGBH. Broadcast masters must be on DigiBeta, Beta SP, D5, or D3. No programming produced for public access cable accepted. Send VHS screening copies of your doc, narrative film, or anim. (no length requirements, incl. s.a.s.e. for return) to: Chad Davis, Viewpoint, WGBH-TV, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-2647; chad_davis@ wgbh.org

Publications

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION'S directory to the independent magazine world can give you names & numbers of editors you need: *Annotations: A Guide To The Independent Press* ($24.95 + $3.05 S&H). Send check to: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 634-4401; www.indypress.org

JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeks written reviews of University Film & Video Association member films for possible inclusion in journal—send approx. 5 double-spaced pages to: Temple University, Dept. of Film & Media Arts, 14E Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8472; lerickson3@aol.com

Resources & Funds

ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM offered by CA Arts Council to individual CA artists involved in Performing Arts. Artists must show 10 years of previous professional experience to be eligible. Matching funds not required & no specific project must be carried out w/ CAC funds. Program funds different disciplines in a 4-yr rotation cycle. 2000-2001: Media & New Genre. Deadline: Sept. 15. Notification of award made in early 2001. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (800) 201-6201; (916) 322-6555; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. Total of $18,000 in awards available to NYC Asian American arts organizations (501(c)(3) status or Charities Bureau registration) w/ annual budget of $100,000 or less. Deadline: late fall. Contact: Chanchal Dadlani, (212) 941-9208 for appl. details & deadlines; info@aaartsalliance.org

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents this interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw @dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Artists' foundation, committed to supporting individual artists is accepting appls. Deadline: Oct. 31. Download from www.creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation

funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appls. reviewed monthly. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative, anim. & exp. projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

SCRIPTS WANTED: See your scenes shot on real locations with our actors who are specially trained for independent films. Utilize it as a way to rewrite your scripts & scenes. For more info, contact: The Acting Factory, 38 S. Federal Hwy., Dania, FL 33004

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: NEH summer stipends support two months of full-time work on projects that will make a significant contribution to the humanities. In most cases, faculty (incl. adjuncts) of colleges and universities must be nominated by their institutions. Deadline: October 1. Stipend: $4,000. Tenure: Two full & uninterrupted months, normally held between May 1 - September 30, 2001. Inquiries: stipends@neh.gov; (202) 606-8200; NEH Fellowships & Summer Stipends, Rm 318, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington DC 20506.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TV seeks story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for Nat'l Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. For CDP (Cultural Diversity Project) appl., call: (202) 775-7860.

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distrib. to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

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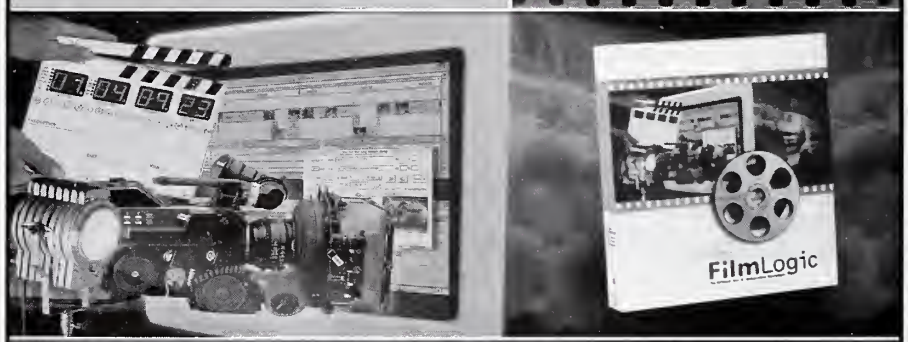




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OPEN CALL 2K: ITVS considers proposals for new innovative programs of standard broadcast length for public TV on ongoing basis. ITVS seeks provocative, spellbinding stories from diverse points of view & diverse communities. No finished works. Projects in any genre (comedy, satire, anim., drama, doc, exp., short) or stage of development considered. Programs should break traditional molds of exploring cultural, political, social, or economic issues, take creative risks, or give voice to those not usually heard. Deadline: Sept. 15. Applications & guidelines: www.itvs.org. Contact: (415) 356-8383, x. 232; Beky_Hayes@ itvs.pbs.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to pro 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in CA, OR & WA. Limited to orgs certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. Deadline: Oct. 1. For proposal summary sheet, send s.a.s.e. to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133; www.pacificpioneerfund.com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. 2 project categories: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Inst., 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

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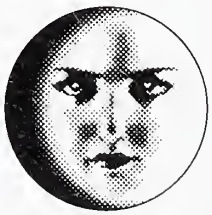
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DIGITAL VIDEOGRAPHER with Sony VX-1000 and Lectrosonic radio mic. available and happy to shoot documentaries and shorts. Contact Melissa (212) 352-4141; mqh8695@is.nyu.edu

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Award-winning, exp, looking for interesting projects. Credits incl. features, docs & commercials in the U.S., Europe & Israel. Own complete Aaton Super 16 pkg & lights. Call Adam for reel. (212) 932-8255 or (917) 504-7244.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY; Looking for creative projects to lens; features, commercials, shorts, music videos & documentaries. 35 and 16mm packages avail. New York/Boston based, will travel. Call for reel: (781) 545-2609; bkarol@mediaone.net

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for interesting features, shorts, ind. projects, etc. Credits incl. features, commercials, industrials, short films, music videos. Aaton 16/S-16 pkg avail. Abe (718) 263-0010.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Owner 16mm Aaton, plus 35mm non-sync & hand-crank cameras. Experimental background; creative look. Shooting credits incl.: Features, shorts, promos, commercials & music videos. New York-based, will travel. Carolyn (718) 930-7969.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ complete 16mm camera, wants to shoot your project. Resumé & reel available upon request. Call Mai Iskander (718) 623-8555; iskander@rcn.com

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DP looking for low-budget short or feature to shoot to build his reel. I own an Aaton Prod (super 16) package with Canon 11-165mm and 8-64mm, and a Century 6mm lens. Contact Dan @ (212) 243-4593.

DP WITH CAMERA: Client list, package details (cameras and editing), view clips/stills. To order reel or contact, visit: www.kozma.com

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EDITOR AVAILABLE; experienced award-winning Avid editor available to work on interesting and innovative pieces. Will work dirt cheap for the chance to be challenged (docs, shorts, features). Call Kevin (212) 591-0589.

EDITOR WITH AVID: Conscientious advocate of the Invisible Cut. Comfy West Village space. AVR77, 216 gigs, Beta, VHS, DV. MC/Visa. Bill G. (212) 243-1343; gcomvid@usa.net

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

EXPERIENCED CAMERAMAN w/ Arri SR II 16mm & Betacam SP packages. Extensive experience in features & documentaries. Edgar Gil (718) 832-1846; maesegil@earthlink.net

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THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: one year's subscription to The Independent • access to group insurance plans • discounts on goods and services from national Trade Partners • online and over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars, screenings, and events • book discounts • classifieds discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members-only web services.

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ASST/ASSOC PROFESSOR, EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION; Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Dept. of Film plans to hire a tenure track asst/assoc. professor in media arts production for Fall 2000. Looking for experimental animator w/ an excellent record of achievement in filmmaking, experience as a teacher & a demonstrated ability to work w/ others. Must have a full range of 16mm film production skills, esp. in experimental animation. Expertise in optical printing &/or computer-based digital video is desirable. MFA or equiv. professional experience is req. Screening continues until position is filled. Send resumé, statement of teaching philosophy, VHS tape of personal animation work & names/contact info of 3 references to: Diane Kitchen, Chair, Search Committee, Film Dept., Univ. of WI-Milwaukee, Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. AA/EOE

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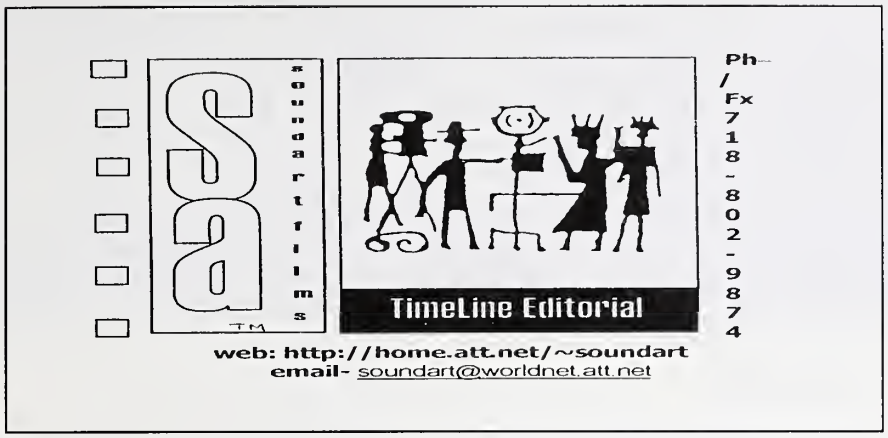
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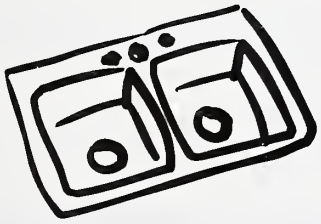
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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.). AIVF events require advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, AmEx, or Mastercard or mail a check or money order. Your check must be received one week prior to event to reserve your seat. Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.

Please Note: reservations are required for all AIVF events, unless otherwise noted. Due to space limitations, we will hold all reserved seats until 5 minutes before the event, upon which unclaimed seats will be given to walk-ins.

The followings details were being confirmed at press time. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

August

With the exception of After Hours, New York events are on hiatus through the month of August. Outside New York, AIVF will be present at the 7th Annual Chicago Underground Film Festival (see below for details).

AFTER HOURS
MEMBER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE

When: First Wednesdays of every month (August 2 and Sept. 6), from 6-9 p.m.; Library opens at 11 a.m.
Cost: free to all; no RSVP necessary.

Our Filmmaker Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories and trade magazines to sample grant proposals and budgets. After Hours is the opportune time to utilitize the library, renew your membership, or buy FIVF-published books.

OUTSIDE NEW YORK:
THE CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL
AUGUST 18-24

Where: Fine Arts Theatre (418 S. Michigan Ave) in Downtown Chicago
For further info: CUFF Hotline: (773) 866-8660; www.cuff.org

AIVF will co-present daily panel discussions at the Chicago Underground Film Festival, with topics ranging from digital filmmaking and Internet opportunities to alternative music/

THE 7TH ANNUAL CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

alternative film and women in the underground. Panelists will include: Jeff Krulik (*Heavy Metal Parking Lot*); Michael Galinsky (*Half-Cocked*, *Radiation*); Katya Bankowsky (*Shadow Boxers*); Matthew Harrison (*Rhythm Thief*, *Bystander from Hell*); Scott Saunders (*Headhunter's Sister*); and Esther Bell (*Godass*). Details pending at press time. For further info: www.cuff.org or www.aivf.org.

September

MEET & GREET
THE LEARNING CHANNEL

When: TBA
Cost: Free to AIVF members; $10 gen. public.

TLC seeks to connect viewers to the human experience through its "life unscripted" approach to storytelling. Such accessible, informative programming makes TLC a compelling network that is one of the top 20 cable net-

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works and is currently in 74 million homes. TLC boasts series running the gamut from *Trauma: Life in the ER* to *A Dating Story* to special programming ranging from journeys to ancient worlds to series chronicling the history of music for a cause.

AIVF AT IFFM
SEPTEMBER 15-22

Where: Angelika Film Center, New York City

For more information on the IFFM: Contact the Independent Feature Project at (212) 465-8200; www.ifp.org

AIVF will be ever-present at the Independent Feature Film Market (Sept. 15-22). Look for staff on panels and on select dates, pick up our

Independent Feature Project

latest flyers and newest publications at the AIVF table at the Angelika Film Center! Details will be posted at www.aivf.org

DV TO 35MM:
PUTTING TRANSFERS TO THE TEST

A PRESENTATION & PANEL FEATURING CLIPS FROM *THE INDEPENDENT*'S TRANSFER TEST

When: Saturday, Sept. 16, 12-2 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives, corner of 2nd Avenue & 2nd Street, NYC
Cost: Free to AIVF members & IFFM badgeholders; $20 general public. Tickets required; avail. first come, first served. See www.aivf.org for details.

Not all transfers look alike. That's the indisputable finding of *The Independent*'s DV-to-35mm transfer test, reported on in this issue (pp. 42-47). Now is your chance to come and see the differences for yourself. In conjunction with the Independent Feature Film Market, we'll be screening excerpts from the tests to showcase



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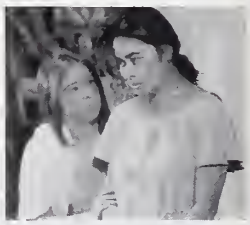
the varying transfer techniques. Representatives from many of the featured companies will be on hand to screen additional clips, explain their transfer processes, and answer your questions, as well as those from technical writer and moderator Robert Goodman. So take advantage of this unique opportunity! Check our web site for updates: www.aivf.org.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS

SELECT SCREENINGS AT THE WALTER READE THEATRE, NYC, PRESENTED BY THE FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members may attend specific films for just $6 per ticket! Please show membership card at box office. The Walter Reade Theatre is located at Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th Street at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

Through August 7:
New Philippine Cinema



August 8-17:
A Tribute: Milestone Film & Video 10th Anniversary

August 18-Sept. 6:
The Cinema of Valerio Zurlini

August 24:
Independent's Night: *Brother Born Again*

September 7-10:
New York Times: The Next Generation of Film

September 15-21:
American Independent Visions: Ed Radke's *The Dream Catcher*



OUTSIDE NEW YORK:

Look for AIVF and *The Independent* at:

The Toronto International Film Festival (Sept. 7-16); www.bell.ca/filmfest/

ResFest, San Francisco (Sept. 7-9); www.resfest.com

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.

See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Anne del Castillo, (512) 322-0145; anne@austinfilm.org

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE, (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45 pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422; dot@inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, aivf_la@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, (414) 276-8563; www.mifs.org/salon

New Brunswick, NJ:
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668; dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Kate Kressman-Kehoe, (716) 244-8629; ksk@netacc.net

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

AIVF BOARD ELECTIONS

Run for the AIVF board of directors! Board members serve three-year terms, gathering four times a year for weekend-long meetings. We have an active board; members must be prepared to spend time at and between meetings to fulfill board responsibilities, which include:

Attendance at all board meetings and participation by email & conference calls in interim • Prep for meetings by reading/preparing advance materials • Active participation in one or more committee areas • General support of executive board and staff • Commitment to the organization's efforts toward financial stability.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members (i.e. dues are paid in full on date of nomination); you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old and AIVF members in good standing.

To make a nomination, email or fax the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee and nominator to the attention of elect@aivf.org. We cannot accept nominations over the phone. Nominations are due at the AIVF offices or in the email box by 6 p.m. EST, **Friday September 1, 2000.**

Voting Eligibility: Only paid AIVF members may vote. Renew by Oct. 15 to be eligible. To verify member status, contact members@aivf.org or (212) 807-1400 x. 236.



The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $112,000.

Millennium Campaign Fund

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

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(gifts of $500 or more)

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nurse her dying white foster mother. Distributed by Ronin Films.

Yvonne Rainer's work – including *Lives of Performers* (1972), *Film About a Woman Who . . .* (1974), *Kristina Talking Pictures* (1976), *Journeys from Berlin/1971* (1980), *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985), *Privilege* (1990), *MURDER and murder* (1996). "Excellent for its combination of intellectual inquiry, political investigation, visual/perceptual innovation, and dramatic reworking of the narrative tradition. Expensive to rent," comments Hammer. Distributed by Zeitgeist.

Marlon Riggs – *Tongues Untied* (1989) 55 min., color, video. *Tongues Untied*, used by many faculty members, employs a combination of narrative, documentary, and experimental modes. It is both a personal and political examination of the homophobia and racism that confront Black gay men. Distributed by Frameline.

Nino Rodriguez – *Identities* (1991) 7 min., video. Bart Weiss uses *Identities* to show how basic production equipment combined with a fresh approach can produce powerful results. Shot with a VHS camcorder, *Identities* consists of the silences between takes as one man tells the story of his partner's death from AIDS. Self distributed by the artist: nino@pobox.com or (718) 622-8744.

Peter Rose – *Secondary Currents* (1990) 18 min., 16mm. Lilly Boruszkowski shows this as an example of sound's ability to suggest image and story. Rose describes it as "a film about the relationship between the mind and language. Delivered by an improbable narrator who speaks an extended assortment of nonsense, it is an 'imageless' film in which the shifting relationships between voiceover commentary and subtitled narration constitute a peculiar duet for voice, thought, speech, and sound." Distributed by Canyon.

Edin Velez – *Dance of Darkness* (1989), 55 min., color, video. Part performance, interview, historical analysis, and trance video, *Dance of Darkness* uses multiple modalities to document Japan's Butoh dancing. Distributed by EAI.

—R.S. & J.S.

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black & white

COMPILED BY BERNARDO RUIZ

This column commemorates the 25th anniversity of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the August/September issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.

"Everyone is searching for short-cuts to bypass the marathon period in filmmaking [editing], the labyrinth of sprocketed spaghetti, suspended from hundreds of pins into the cloth-covered sacred urns."

—Sol Rubin, 1979

"There are now about 1.5 million videocasette recorders in the United States—most of them in the VHS format, but with a significant minority in Betamax . . . Clearly, there is the beginning of a significant audience here, which is already being exploited by commercial firms whose principal products are Hollywood features and pornographic films."

—John Schwartz, 1980

"Will video projection in the future, with improvements in cameras, decks, scan line resolution and projection systems, provide an economically viable alternative to the costliness of film prints?"

—Amy Greenfield, 1981

"In the age of Reagan, its not simply that the [National Endowment for the Humanities] cannot hold, but that it has, alas, disappeared."

—Susan Linfield, 1984

"Perhaps this is the time for filmmakers to actively promote new ways of thinking about weapons, warfare, and global cooperation. It is necessary for filmmakers to go beyond warnings, beyond traditional assumptions, and challenge viewers to change their own lives and the fate of our earth."

—David Riker, 1985

"The problems of distribution in the third world make the U.S. independents' dealings with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting seem like a piece of cake."

—Coco Fusco, 1986

"The increasing number of bankruptcies of Manhattan labs may be attributed to the inability of these labs to diversify their facilities to accommodate the growing use of video, resulting in declining print orders, high rent, and a difficult economic climate."

—Quynh Thai, 1987

"The stake for the future is high. As satellite and cable technology and hardware become more available, the terms of this debate [on public access] will change yet again. 'Broadcasting' will evolve into forms of mass communication which differ from the present more than we can ever imagine. Who knows what 'public TV' will mean around the next bend in the road?"

—Jack Levine, 1988



"I hope [ITVS] does not look nearly as white, as stuffy, and is much more inventive looking. It will be a place where you find the predictable, also some surprises, and I hope the surprises come from the [newly created] ITVS."

—John Schott, 1990

"As government funding has proven less and less adequate to finance the growth of the media arts organizational field, the spotlight has shifted to private sector philanthropy and earned income."

—Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, 1991

"The world of independent film production and distribution entered a new era last May when the Walt Disney Company purchased the Miramax film corporation for a reported $60 to $65 million."

—Jordan Elgraby, 1993

"On September 1, the Bravo Cable Network will launch the Independent Film Channel . . . [T]he need for a separate channel became apparent five years ago when . . . two days before Jean Luc Godard's *Hail Mary* was scheduled to be broadcast, [Bravo] underwent a vicious attack from the radical right, which included hostile picketers, bomb threats, and anonymous callers asking for home addresses."

—Jennine Lanouette, 1994

"A lot of people don't like to hear this and get angry when I say it, but film is a business. There's a very distinct line between art and money. To create art in the film industry, you need money. To get money, you need to attract people, and you need to have your business done correctly. To me, you're not a filmmaker until the first day of principal photography. Before that you need to be a businessman."

—Larry Meistrich, 1995

"When you edit film, you CUT! and SPLICE! with a sharp GUILLOTINE splicing block! OW! With an Avid, you essentially fondle a mouse. That's a big difference . . . With film editing, you smell, touch, even taste the film sometimes . . . With a computer-based digital system, the *sex* is gone. It's a clinical, unsensual process—a perfect analog for the neutered nineties. Despite all this, I'm unequivocally hooked. I'll never cut film again."

—Brad Anderson, 1997

"Long before the NEA ended its individual filmmaker grants, they cut out the regional sub-granting program. And those are the kinds of amounts we're often dealing with for our *[Split Screen]* segments: those were generally $2,000 to $5,000 grants. Greg Araki got one. Richard Linklater got one . . . When you look at something like that disappearing off the map, as well as the various and sundry state arts councils, it's pathetic."

—John Pierson, 1998

"That's the scary thing about shooting in New York: You can have all your permits lined up and do everything right, until the one moment when something goes wrong. Then all these people are just looking for a reason, any reason at all, to pull your plug.

—Jim Fall, 1999

COMPILED BY BERNARDO RUIZ



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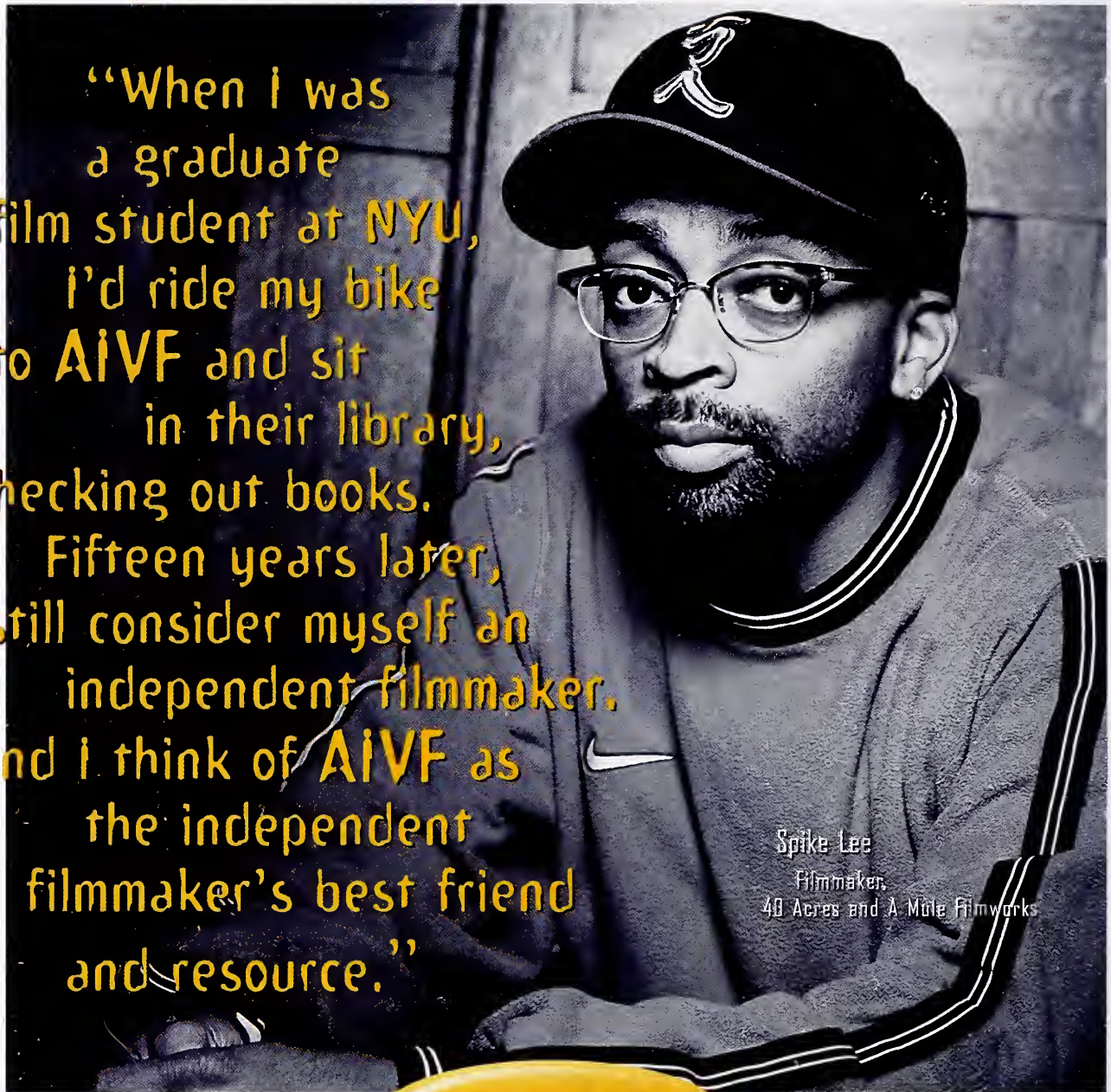


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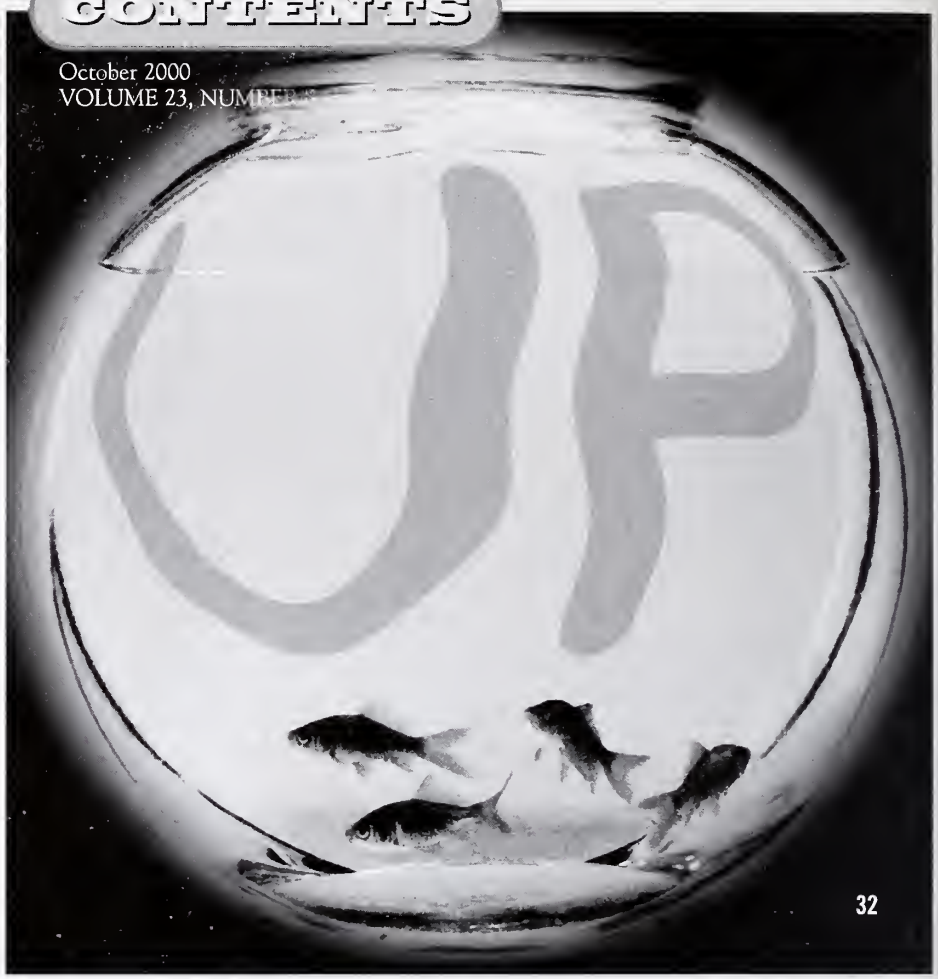
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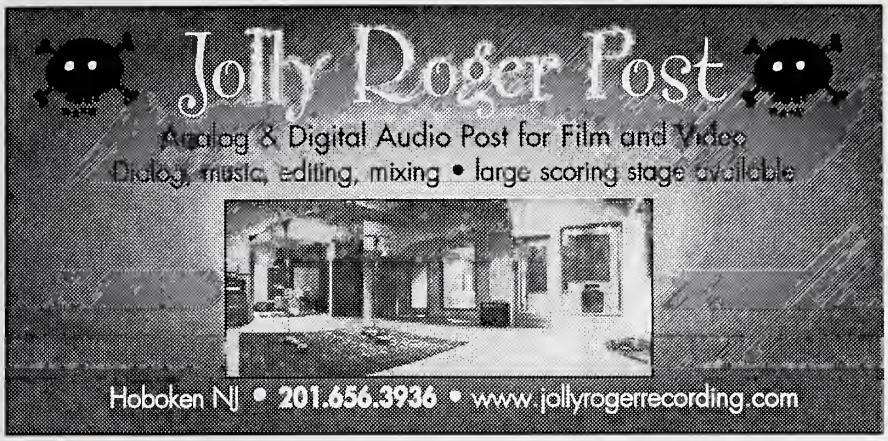


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STATION TO STATION

To the editor:

To watch people put their spin on events is always best viewed from the inside. So Pat Aufderheide's article ("Pittsburgh Pirates," May 2000) on my old station raised my eyebrows more often than Groucho did with Margaret Dumont.

I worked at WQEX for nearly 11 years, seven as programmer. As Pittsburgh's second public station, WQEX differentiated itself by passing on standard PBS fare seen on WQED (*Nova*, *Nature*, etc.) for a mix of local talk shows and syndicated public TV favorites (British comedies, etc.). "Classic TV" like *The Honeymooners* and *St. Elsewhere* (sorry, we never ran *Lassie*) aired in the hopes of drawing non-traditional public TV viewers into the tent and interesting them with our other offerings.

Our viewers' overriding concern seemed to center around series like *Are You Being Served?*, not *We Do the Work*. No coalition of community activists ever "battled WQED over WQEX's schedule." Perhaps these groups were more interested in targeting programming for the much bigger WQED. Only when our proposed sale came to light were we suddenly regarded as a precious "local resource." Pittsburgh Filmmakers executive director Charlie Humphrey remarked, "WQEX could become a linchpin for independent media distribution." It had been, airing many works distributed through ITVS and others, and even our local showcase, *On Camera*.

No "coalition pressure" prompted WQEX to showcase "underrepresented perspectives." We aired such series as *In the Life* and *Rights and Wrongs* with little or no local urging. Our own *Labor's Corner* aired three years because it was largely funded by labor groups. Their underwriting eventually dried up, and financial constraints meant WQEX could no longer justify propping up this or any other series that wasn't fully funded. *Labor's Corner* posed the question that when no one is watching (it never attracted even a minimum rating), and even its own supporters won't call during pledge drives, then what community is really being served?

Aufderheide characterizes WQED as wanting to "unload WQEX onto a religious broadcaster." It had no such desire. It was interested in swapping its second noncommercial license (WQEX) for a commercial license it could then sell. The potential swapper could have been a school board, a Spanish language or minority broadcaster; it made absolutely no difference to WQED. In this case, the one willing partner was Cornerstone. Chance, not intentions, made for these strange bedfellows.

Jerry Starr's *Air Wars*, which chronicles the WQEX sale, points up the need for community involvement in keeping local public stations and their boards accountable—a good thing, especially when so many station boards seem to operate in rubber stamp mode. But Starr's notion of community involvement is for special interest groups to pressure stations to air programs that only members of that group would watch. Starr urged me to air *Out Across America* on WQEX, a gay/lesbian series that was riddled with commercial endorsements clearly in violation of PBS guidelines. Even the San Francisco area stations refused to air this series. Over the years we aired many programs of interest to gay/lesbian audiences. Starr had not seen the series, but that didn't stop him from urging us to run it and castigating us for refusing to do so.

The FCC's actions last December (approving the WQEX license swap, reminding Cornerstone of criteria in holding an educational license) were simply based on standing policy. For Starr to have "claimed victory for citizens' groups" is truly reaching. This is not to say grassroots groups can not and should not try to impact their local public stations. But in Pittsburgh's case, groups like the QED Accountability Project can hardly take credit for having no discernable influence on a ruling.

Tony Buba, whose fine documentary *Struggles in Steel* aired on both WQED and WQEX, was quoted in Aufderheide's article as saying "We need to get the station [WQEX] for the community." In fact the station was there for the community in the time it was a differentiated service (1986-1997), but so many ignored it or took it for granted until it was too late.

Jim Weiner
Yellow Springs, OH

Pat Aufderheide replies:

I do wish I'd had the opportunity to talk with Jim Weiner, but repeated calls to WQED (still WQEX's caretaker) in the course of two rounds of reporting never even merited a callback. Weiner's insider take on the problems of programming secondary/overlap stations is a poignant reminder of the way such stations are often starved for resources.

Public broadcasting needs more people like Weiner, but it needs to support them well in their attempt to create a vital community service. Weiner is correct that WQED would have sold WQEX to anyone, and it tried to; the deal it went with eventually was the only way it could make money by a station transfer. I did not mean to imply WQED went hunting for a religious broadcaster, but that they went hunting for any way to sell the second station. The FCC in fact did rule on standing policy, but it was the initiative of two citizens' groups and a public interest law firm that reminded them of that policy. Ironically, that simple reiteration has provoked conservative lawmakers into attempting to remove all programming guidelines from religious public stations, as the article explains.

YOU LOOKIN' AT ME?

To the editor:

After reading Richard Baimbridge's blurb "Best Performance by Former AIVF Employee" ["The Best (and Worst) of Sundance," May 2000], I feel the need to respond. I have no problem being affiliated with AIVF or *The Independent*—in fact, I am proud of it and remember my time there fondly. However, I do have a problem with Baimbridge, who chooses to refer to me as someone who answered phones "in a sultry Spanish accent" and further says I am not only "beautiful" but etc.

Aside from the fact that any of these "characteristics" are completely subjective and irrelevant to the filmmaking process, I happen to find them sexist and demeaning. It appears as if my ability to do anything well (films, for example) is directly linked to the tone of my voice or how "beautiful" I am. In the long run, it implies that I shared that award at Sundance for the same reason. I wish Baimbridge had been professional enough to discuss my career so far in film terms, not personal. And I hope *The Independent* won't allow this again—former employee or not.

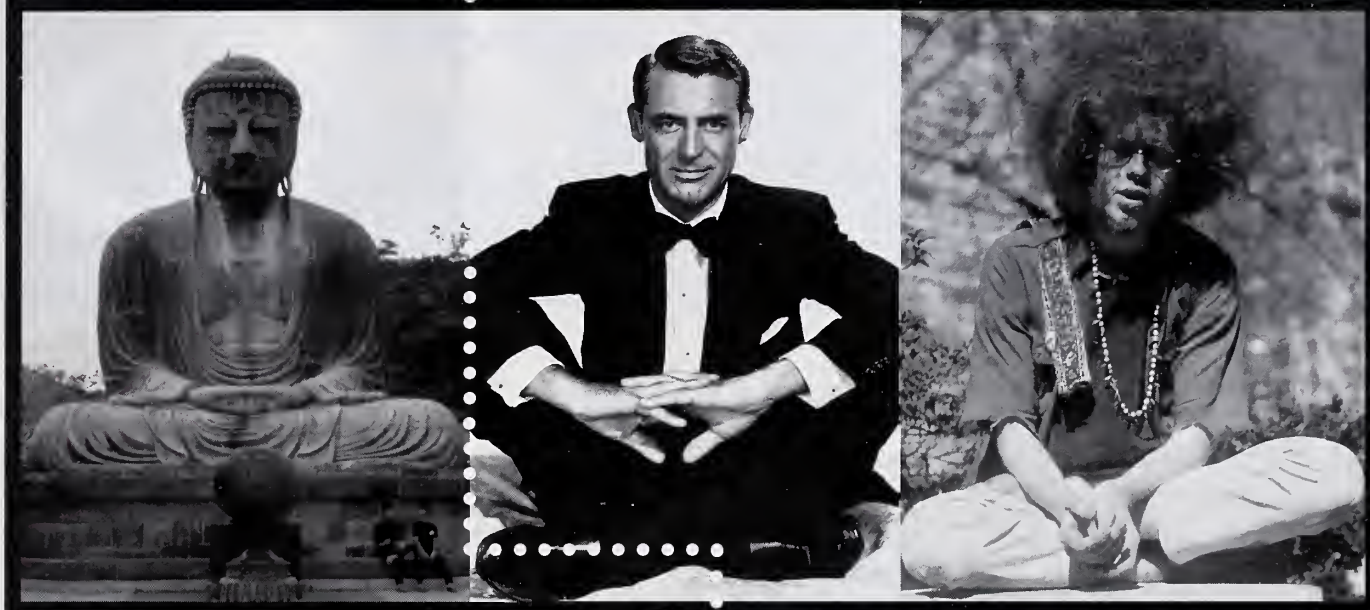
Eva Vives, via email

Richard Baimbridge replies:

My sincere apologies to you, Eva, for any offense. I wanted nothing less than the opposite, which was to praise both you and the film, though I was only granted a few lines to do so, and tried to be humorous in the context. I actually wrote that I felt like "a proud parent" seeing you accept the award, thus making the sexual element rather confusing. But at the risk of betraying your country y *nuestra lengua*, I can see how you would find my description of Spanish as "sultry" as being, um, sexist. More to the point, when I re-read what I wrote, I can also see how you found it condescending to be described more as a former office assistant than as a filmmaker. I guess I was struck by the "Hey, our little sister grew up fast" syndrome. So again, my apologies. As for describing you as beautiful, I hope that even we at über-PC AIVF never reach the point where that is considered insulting, as long as it is meant as an honest compliment and not an insinuation—which could not be any more true in this case.

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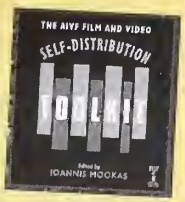
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The mission of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is to increase the creative and professional opportunities for independent video and filmmakers and to ensure and enhance the growth of independent media by providing services, advocacy, and information. In these ways, AIVF promotes diversity and democracy in the communication and expression of ideas and images.

AIVF Founding Principles:

1 The Association is an organization of and for independent video- and filmmakers.

2 The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video an filmmaking is more than just a job, that it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.

3 The Association works, through the combined efforts of the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5 The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

An Offer You Can't Refuse

Madstone offers indies $50K salary, benefits, and production budget.

BY EMILY BOBROW



Head of Feature Development and Production Eva Kolodner, and co-founders and CEOs Chip Seelig (above, right) & Tom Gruenberg.

COURTESY MADSTONE FILMS

IT'S AN OFFER THAT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE true. The founders of Madstone Films, a new Manhattan-based production and distribution company, firmly dismiss skepticism about any strings attached to their attractive new salaried deal for emerging filmmakers. "There's no seedy underside here," claims head of marketing Dave Anderson. "We are 100 percent independent—idealists with the best intentions in mind."

The intentions in question are pretty bold. Every six months, Madstone will award three to five young fiction directors a two-year contract, with a package that includes a $50,000 annual salary, a workspace in Madstone's downtown loft, health and dental benefits, a 401(K) plan, and full financing for features budgeted from $500,000 to $1.5 million. The company's collaborative atmosphere is reinforced by a financial incentive: filmmakers earn a percentage of every film made during their tenure. The goal is to create a creative and nurturing environment for first-time directors, free of the typical pressures that plague aspiring indies.

"We want to give talented young filmmakers work here and free them from worries like 'how am I going to pay my rent?' " explains Madstone co-founder Tom Gruenberg. "We feel once we free up these creative forces, we'll be able to make better films." While Gruenberg is not keen to disclose the company's share of the profit, he is quick to add, "after two years, our directors leave us. We have no call on them or their future projects. Zero."

Rather than transferring the company's films from digital to 35mm for projection, Madstone plans to retrofit 50 theaters across the country with digital projectors and distribute the films themselves.

Madstone's model for financing independents is the brainchild of Gruenberg, a 25-year veteran of the industry, and Chip Seelig, a partner at Goldman Sachs. It combines collaborative digital filmmaking with guaranteed distribution, courtesy of Madstone's own custom-made Digital Distribution Network. Rather than transferring the company's films from digital to 35mm for projection, Madstone plans to retrofit 50 theaters in "demographic-friendly locations" across the country with digital projectors and distribute the films themselves—a profit-making scheme that hinges on partnerships with major exhibitors. This distribution endeavor, backed by undisclosed individual investors and venture capitalists, is expected to be running by early 2001.

"Everyone goes out with the idea that they'll make a better film, but ensuring our films' distribution is the Digital Distribution Network," says Madstone's head of feature development and production Eva Kolodner, formerly a Killer Films producer (*Boys Don't Cry*). "This is a big change we're at the start of. We're bringing in both the technology and a new kind of theater-going experience, which is what really makes this exciting."

According to Gruenberg, digital projection will revolutionize theater programming, allowing for the technical flexibility necessary for "putting more tushies in the seats" during slow business hours. However, the requisite partnerships are still in development. (Conversations with representatives from Loews and AMC, two named targets for Madstone's plan, revealed that no deals exist yet.)

Though Madstone's distribution plans are currently little more than a blueprint, the company's development deal seems promising. "If people are going to get paid a salary to toil away on their projects instead of doing it for free, then that's a great deal, particularly if you're an unknown," comments Other Pictures producer Dan Partland (*The Ballad of Ramblin' Jack*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*).

CineBlast's Gill Holland concurs: "From the filmmakers' perspective, it is daunting getting into bed with someone, especially when you are strapped for cash. But as long as the contract does not tie you up for too long, make you too exclusive, or own every idea you come up with in the next two years, it should be considered a godsend for the folks that get it."

At presstime, the lucky folks in question had yet to be decided (a short list of 10 had been whittled down from an unexpectedly large number of applicants, forcing Madstone to postpone its start date from July to October). Nonetheless, Gruenberg sounds confident: "All we're doing is taking some of the most talented filmmakers of the next generation, putting them together, and saying 'Go ahead, make your first film, and if it doesn't work, we'll both still be here tomorrow.' "

For further information, contact Madstone Films, 85 Fifth Ave., 12 fl., New York, NY 10003; (212) 989-4500; fax: 989-7744; www.madstonefilms.com

Emily Bobrow is an associate editor at The Economist *and freelance writer.*

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Studio heads: Austin Film Society's Rick Linklater and Rebecca Campbell.

PHOTO: SHANNON MCINTIRE, COURTESY AFS

HANGARS ON: Former Airport Houses New Studio

AS EARLY AS THIS FALL, INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS will have access to 93,000 square feet of production space and soundstages at a new studio complex being established five minutes from downtown Austin, Texas. The Austin Film Society (AFS) and what AFS artistic director (and AIVF board member) Richard Linklater describes as a "loose coalition of filmmakers" convinced the local government to turn a small portion of the recently closed Robert Mueller Municipal Airport into a media arts and production center, yet to be named. The AFS is negotiating the lease and management contracts with city officials and, according to AFS director Rebecca Campbell, expects to have an agreement in place by fall.

The former airport site offers soundstages, abundant office space, and sufficient parking all in one secure central location. Proposed site plans include the use of four hangars for soundstages (each averaging 13,000 sq. ft.); 8,000 sq. ft. of production offices; and a 25,000 sq. ft. building that will house a small theater as well as space available by long-term lease to local businesses and nonprofits.

In a town where civic activism is a badge of honor, AFS staff and board members, neighborhood leaders, and Linklater's "loose coalition of filmmakers" (including himself, Elizabeth Avellan, Sandra Bullock, Mike Judge, and Robert Rodriguez) convinced city bureaucrats and politicians in February to adopt the redevelopment proposal.

Once functional, the studio will enable the 1,200 member AFS to expand on its media arts organization services and enhance the artists' programs it currently offers. (Among the most successful AFS programs is the Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund, which has distributed $230,000 to 94 artists in its first five years.)

Campbell says that "it's a goal to get independent filmmakers in the new facility." Campbell also wants to incubate film projects with low-cost office space and encourage the growth of other media arts organizations, building what she calls "a true arts community around the facilities at the airport."

The AFS will operate the studio under a seven-year management contract with a three-year renewal option. A key element of the AFS proposal is to support internships, job training, and scholarships for low-income students and youth interested in exploring a career in film production at the site. The Film Society has appointed an internal task force to develop the requirements and features of the program. Any profits, beyond operating and maintenance expenses, will be placed in a restricted fund for the City of Austin to use in redeveloping the former municipal airport.

The availability of a professional production facility comes at a critical time for the Texas film industry. 1999 was one of the worst years, both in terms of revenue and number of projects, for film and television production in the state in nearly two decades. For many feature-length films, the availability of soundstage facilities means lower costs and shorter production time.

Tom Copeland, director of the Texas Film Commission, is a vocal advocate of the AFS proposal. "I think it's great," he says. "It's solving a real space crunch. The way Austin's economy has grown lately has made it hard for filmmakers to find any kind of usable soundstage space any more. It's hard to find a vacant warehouse anywhere in Austin, or if you do, the owners aren't interested in a short-term lease."

Copeland believes the new studio will be a "shot in the arm" for local film, multimedia, and television production, adding,

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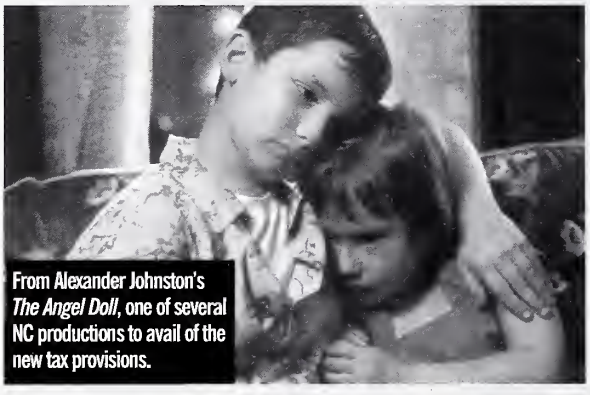
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"This new studio space is a terrific incentive to get filmmakers to come here, and it gives the city something really special to show off when they're marketing Austin to producers."

CARY L. ROBERTS

Cary L. Roberts is an Austin-based screenwriter and president of the Texas Writers Project, Inc.

California & North Carolina Woo Runaway Production



From Alexander Johnston's *The Angel Doll*, one of several NC productions to avail of the new tax provisions.

AS FILMMAKERS FLEE TO CANADA IN increasing numbers to shoot movies, issues of national loyalty take a back seat to cutting production costs. Canada's appealing combination of tax incentives for film production and favorable exchange rates makes it hard for the U.S. to compete as a production center [see "Recapturing Runaway Production," Jan./Feb. 2000].

In 1999, the Directors Guild of America (DGA) and Screen Actors Guild (SAG) hired a consulting firm to conduct an investigation into the phenomenon of "runaway" film and television production from the U.S. The results were grim. In 1998, of the 1,075 U.S.-developed film and television productions considered, 285 (27%) were economic runaways, a 185% increase from 100 in 1990. In 1998 alone this resulted in a $10.3 billion economic loss, five times the runaway loss in 1990.

Recently the U.S. government has taken steps to bring our filmmakers home. In May, Vice President Al Gore asked the Commerce Department to investigate the runaway production phenomenon after six Democratic California congressmen brought the issue to his attention. Expect to hear Gore sound off on the topic of runaway productions again as he campaigns in Democrat-heavy Hollywood.

Lawmakers in California are already on the move. Faced with thousands of lost jobs and total loss in the millions of dollars over the next couple of years, California's reliance on filmmaking for economic development and as a revenue generator for labor, facilities, housing, and nondurables make runaway productions an avoidable thorn in the side of the state's financial health.

Two bills designed to stem the flow of runaway production in California are moving closer to law. The bills, which give tax incentives to producers who film in California, were passed on May 26 by the Assembly's Appropriations Committee. Assembly Bill 484, authored by Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl, would give producers who shoot their films entirely in California a tax credit equal to six percent of their qualified labor costs on productions costing $5 million or less. This is especially good news for independent filmmakers. Assembly Bill 358, authored by Assemblyman Scott Wildman, would establish a 10 percent tax credit for labor costs incurred by film, television, and commercial production companies that maintain all production operations within California.

In addition, with the signing of his 2000-2001 State Budget, Governor Gray Davis took a major step to save California's $28 billion annual film industry with the inclusion of the "Film California First" initiative. Film California First sets aside $15 million annually over the next three years to reimburse state, federal, and local agencies for certain costs incurred in filmmaking that are normally reimbursed by production companies—including state employee costs, federal employee costs, federal permit and rental costs, and local public employee costs for fire services and non-police public safety. The initiative aims to encourage commu-

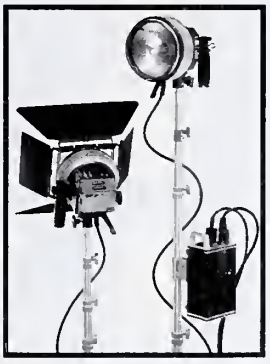


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nities all over the state to welcome film crews by offering financial incentives to cities and towns that agree to serve as production hosts.

East of the Mississippi, North Carolina —the number three filmmaking state in the U.S.—is also taking a stand. In an attempt to keep production numbers high (last year saw 67 major productions, including 22 feature films, shot in the state) and slow the continuing loss of film business to Canada, state legislators have introduced a bill that would give producers 15 percent of the wages paid out to local crews, with an annual cap of $200,000 per production. Although this figure doesn't quite match the 22% rebate offered by the Canadian government, the bill is a small step toward narrowing the gap between Canada and North Carolina.

In addition, North Carolina currently works with small business offices to provide a state income tax rebate of 33% of a producer's total in-state spending. Other production hubs around the country are trying to increase small business lending limits from $750,000 to $1 million, which will greatly facilitate the raising of finance by independent film and TV producers.

From coast to coast, states are getting nervous about runaway productions. Is Hollywood going to become the next Flint, Michigan? Is Canada gearing itself up to be the world's indie filmmaking center? Is a Canadian grip just as good as an American grip? Answers to these questions and many more will come soon, as more and more low-budget films are being produced and states like California and North Carolina must find ways to extend a hand to homegrown filmmakers.

BRENDAN PETERSON

Brendan Peterson [swordfsh@mail.wenet.net] is a critic & writer who covers independent film in the San Francisco Bay Area.

ERRATA

In the Aug/Sept. issue, the director of *Geezers*' name was misspelled in "Licensemusic.com Takes the Blues out of Music Rights." The correct spelling is Peter Bohush.

In "Kusama's Knockout," *3 a.m.* was misidentified as Karen Kusama's next film. It is that of actress Michelle Rodriguez. In addition, *Girlfight* cinematographer Patrick Cady and editor Plummy Tucker both worked for John Sayles previously, but not in those specific capacities.



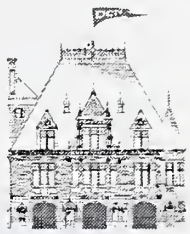
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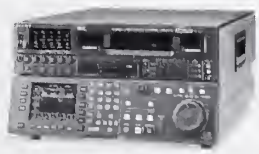
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Jilann Spitzmiller and Hank Rogerson

Homeland

BY JERRY WHITE



PHOTO: SHANA HAGAN, COURTESY FILMMAKERS

TALKING ABOUT NATIVE AMERICA IN THE present tense is an important goal for directors Jilann Spitzmiller and Hank Rogerson. "We felt it was important to tell this as a contemporary story," the directors state about their new documentary, *Homeland*. "We wanted to encourage viewers to look at current realities of reservation life, which are virtually unknown and often very disturbing—severe poverty, homelessness, poor health, alcoholism."

Homeland tackles the present head-on. The hour-long film, which airs on PBS on November 16, focuses on life on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation. One of the poorest parts of the United States, Pine Ridge was recently chosen by the federal government as one of six "Economically Distressed" regions.

Both filmmakers spent time living in Santa Fe before moving to L.A., and while they came in contact with Native American culture there, Spitzmiller and Rogerson had no inside track into Lakota society on the Great Plains. Despite this, the filmmakers found their subjects to be extremely open to talking to them about their embattled lives.

The duo started out by recruiting Hugh Margerson, a California-based activist who was well-known to the native community. He was able to vouch for the filmmakers and make introductions during the early stages.

Then Spitzmiller and Rogerson tried to immerse themselves in reservation life. The two made a series of trips to Pine Ridge, each lasting a few weeks. Although they managed to stay on the reservation, they were usually in community centers rather than with the families they were documenting (overcrowded housing conditions on the reservation is one of the documentary's central concerns).

Spitzmiller and Rogerson wound up focusing on four families and interweaving the stories of a spiritual leader, a grandmother, an artist, and a community activist, following their situations over the course of three years. "The families were willing to share right off the bat," says Rogerson. "They saw it as an opportunity to speak out and have their voices heard."

One of the reasons the filmmakers spent three years in production was because of their decision to shoot in 16mm, the cost of which necessitated a more grueling and extended search for funding. Rogerson says they had originally planned to shoot *Homeland* on Beta, but they decided to switch over to film. This was an entirely aesthetic decision. "We felt that the landscape itself was going to be a character," Spitzmiller recalls. "The great plains, the reservation—there's a lot of unspoiled beauty up there, and we wanted to capture that on film, because you just cannot get it on video in the same way." They spent almost their entire start-up grant (from Seattle's Edgebrook Foundation) on their first shoot. Over the course of three years, Spitzmiller and Rogerson would return to Pine Ridge when they had raised more funds to continue shooting. A series of fund-raisers enabled them to process some of the footage and go after finishing funds, which ended up coming from the Soros Foundation and ITVS.

Simply processing footage was a major landmark. During shooting, Spitzmiller and Rogerson never had enough cash to process anything. In trying to plan production as they shot, Robertson recalls, "we were going on listening to the sound, not even knowing if there was a picture for that sound." During one sequence, spiritual leader Michael Little Boy makes reference to an eagle flying over the house. "I knew he had said that because we had the audio," says Spitzmiller, "but I didn't know if we actually had *filmed* him saying it. When that eagle did actually fly over the house, we were hoping that we'd got that, too, but we weren't sure until literally a year and a half later, when we processed the film and realized that we had both the prediction and the appearance." Rogerson likens the production process waiting to open Christmas presents: "You have a good idea of what's inside the package, but actually opening it and seeing it is such a treat."

The funds from ITVS have also allowed an unanticipated level of promotion. "They put a lot of money into outreach," says Spitzmiller, something that's a top priority for the filmmaking team. They were particularly pleased when one of the film's subjects, Lakota activist Mary White Mouse, came to the film's screening at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival. She invited the enthusiastic audience to bring their hammers and nails to Pine Ridge and pitch in. "For me, that experience showed that it's just as important to bring people like her from the reservation out to the film as it is to bring people out to native communities," says Spitzmiller. The film has also showed at the Taos Talking Pictures Festival, the Aboriginal Voices Festival (in Toronto), the Santa Barbara Film Festival, and the Nashville Independent Film Festival, where it won the award for Best Short Documentary.

Their most important screening happened well before these, though, in Pine Ridge's community center. Right after they finished the film, Spitzmiller and Rogerson had a screening for the reservation's families and their friends. "That was an extraordinary and exhilarating experience," Spitzmiller recalls fondly. "They had a really good reaction to it, which was a great

relief after all the years of work. Showing it to them was a real validation of our effort."

Contact: Philomath Films, 454 1/2 N. Spaulding Ave., L.A., CA 90036; (323) 655-8490; philomath@earthlink.net

Jerry White is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, where he also teaches Film Studies.

Laurie Collyer

Nuyorican Dream

BY BERNARDO RUIZ



LAURIE COLLYER'S FIRST FILM WAS A TWO-minute short about a woman who elaborately sets a table for a dinner party, takes off her clothes, then climbs into the serving dish, naked. "She looks like a piece of meat, but it's kind of sexy, too," Collyer explains. Though it was her opera prima, the short foreshadowed two important elements in Collyer's Sundance 2000 contender, *Nuyorican Dream:* Controversy and Robert Torres. (Collyer shot the short in friend Robert Torres' kitchen.)

Nuyorican Dream is a feature-length documentary chronicling the struggles of a Brooklyn Puerto Rican family. The film follows Robert Torres, eldest son and the only one of his family to finish high school and college. Marta Gutierrez, his mother, is the matriarch holding the pieces of the family together. Robert's brother Danny spends half his life in prison, and sisters Betti and Tati struggle with addiction. Marta supports the entire extended family through welfare and selling homemade pasteles and used clothing on the street.

What could have easily been an ethnographic or social-issue documentary is in fact a gripping and moving portrait of people, not issues. The film steers away from didactic or moralistic tropes and simply portrays the uncomfortable truths of a family in struggle. The film brings a human face to the statistic that 30 percent of Puerto Ricans live in poverty. Unsurprisingly the film has struck a chord with audiences, both Latino and non-Latino. The film picked up best documentary at the New York International Latino Film Festival and music producer Jellybean Benitez and actor John Leguizamo have lent their names to the film.

It is a stunning achievement that Collyer, an outsider, was able to get inside such difficult and complex material. Like David Riker, who worked carefully with his Latino cast in *La Ciudad*, Collyer worked to gain the kind of access that can only be given if there is complicity between filmmaker and subject.

"I am white and a lot of people thought I would make an exploitation film. They thought it would be like Oscar Lewis' *La Vida*. But when you give trust, you get it. When you tell people, 'Tell your story; it's important,' you are giving them trust. This makes them trust you more easily. When you give love, you get trust. When you are loyal and consistent, you also get trust. I spent a lot of time with this family without the camera."

For many years, Collyer also worked in group homes and special ed classes. The impact of those experiences as well as seeing firsthand "the relationship between communities in crisis—prisons, drugs, violence and poverty"—also prompted her to tackle the project. "I am now intimately familiar with the prison industrial complex in this country and how destructive it is.

"When you make a documentary it is because you have questions that you want to answer, as a human being and as a filmmaker," she continues. "I wanted to understand the cycle of poverty. I wanted to understand Latin culture better [and] the parallels between my own Anglo and Italian background, as well as the differences."

The origins of the project also lie in Collyer's deep friendship with Torres. Laurie began photographing Torres for classes she was taking at San Francisco City College in the early nineties. At the time, Collyer was working on a short documentary about a teenager in a special ed class called *Thanh*. Neil Young, who supports a school for disabled children with his wife, showed a 10-minute clip at one of his concerts. As Collyer explains, "Robert loved this film." The two soon decided to make a documentary about Robert's family. They began the project in 1994, but Collyer took a two-year shooting hiatus to attend NYU's graduate film program. Financing for the project came from small foundation grants spread over the course of five years. The project was initially pitched as a family portrait of the American nightmare, but later on Collyer was convinced that she should pitch the project as a film about Torres. The theory was that it would be more uplifting if it focused on the success story of a son who was able to get out of the ghetto.

"This didn't always work, because it is not a film about Robert per se. But funders were afraid of this film anyway." Eventually HBO stepped in to acquire it for Cinemax Reel Life. "God bless HBO, because otherwise this film would never have been finished." The film is still in debt, however. "If anyone wants to help out . . . ."

Collyer has at least two projects in development. *Street Time* is a documentary she is developing together with Richard Stratto (*Slam*, *Whiteboys*, and *Prisoners of the War on Drugs*) for Court TV. It is a portrait of life on the streets after prison.

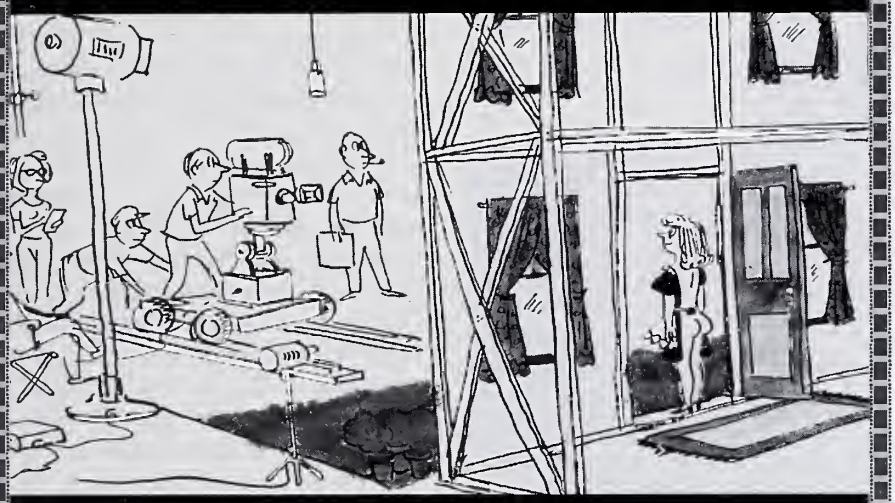
But her real baby is *Shall Not Want*, a feature script she began in 1994. "*Shall Not Want* starts on the day a 24-year-old woman is released from prison and reunites with her five-year-old daughter, now a virtual stranger. I'm trying to get the script to some famous movie chicks who need to play a role like this."

More importantly for Collyer, she maintains strong links to the people in her film. She has adopted Torres' niece, Ieysha, as a godchild, and takes her to singing lessons every week. "I am a part of their lives and they are a part of mine."

HBO plans to broadcast the film on October 16 at 8:30 p.m. For further information, contact: Big Mouth Productions, (212) 343-9606, or Laurie Collyer (212) 939-9339; laur2000@bellatlantic.net

Bernardo Ruiz is a freelance writer and filmmaker.

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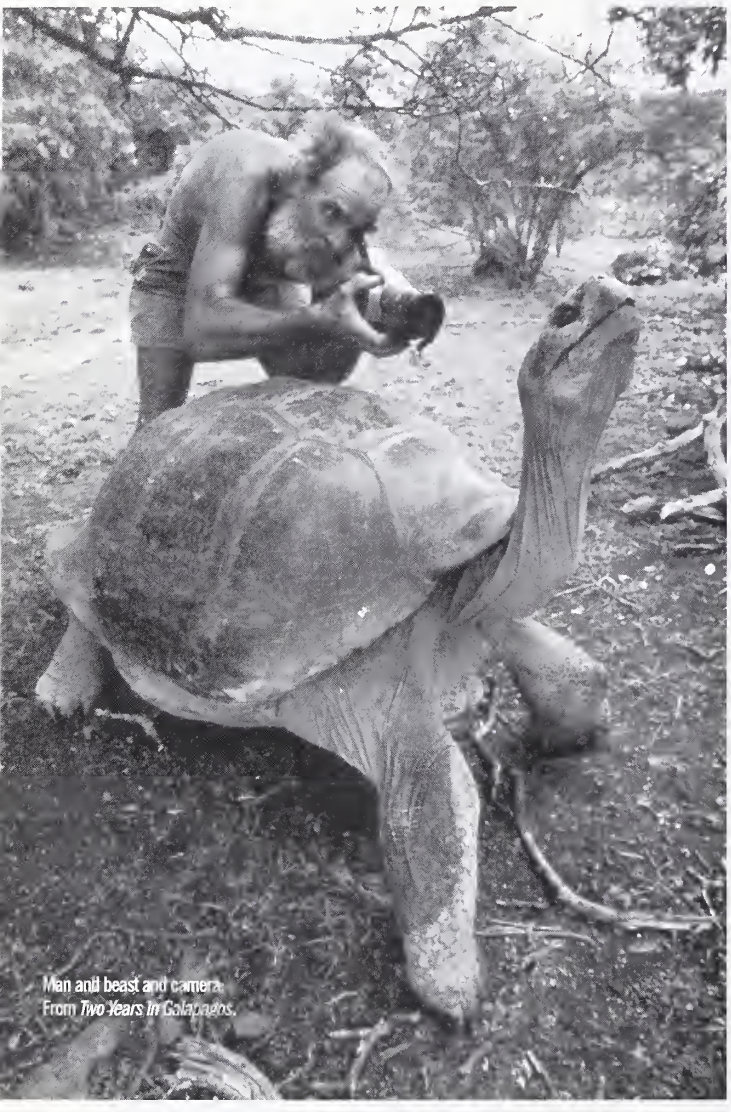
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Walk on the Wild Side

The International Wildlife Film Festival

BY CARL MROZEK



Man and beast and camera. From *Two Years in Galapagos.*

"LIVE, FROM MISSOULA MONTANA!" WAS the salutation at the 23rd annual International Wildlife Film Festival [www.wildlifefilms.org], streamed live from Missoula's Holiday Inn for four days in April. "We got email from China, Russia, the Middle East, but a lot of our hits were short," says web producer James Greer. "With high bit rate film clips, the response could have been even better. I think a lot of visitors expected to see wildlife clips."

Unfortunately, the webcast cameras were not rolling on the Wild Walk Parade, which launched a new edition of the oldest wildlife film festival in America, if not the world. Ranks of fine-feathered children strutted their home-made plumage down the main streets of Missoula towards a riverside park, where wildlife and the environment were celebrated with pomp and circumstance.

There were papier maché parrots, rhinos, sharks, and chameleons in the Children's Wildlife Fashion Show. Afterwards, musicians, actors, animal handlers, and educators entertained and educated us about wild things. The pavilion was lined with two long rows of tables peopled by representatives from many of the ecological and environmental groups based in Missoula. Overall, this event set the stage for the biodiversity of perspectives presented on the silver screen. This opener, plus the cover stories in Missoula's weekly newspapers, made it crystal clear how strongly Missoula embraces the annual spring event.

But, as its name implies, the International Wildlife Film Festival (IWFF) is also an international event. This year, a record 254 films from 20 countries were entered. They ranged from pithy PSAs like *Wildlife in Seattle Parks* (1 min.) to ponderous features like *Pennsylvania Elk* (85 min.). This year's top prize-winner was *Hokkaido: Garden of the Gods* (49 min.), a program on the reverential relationship between Japan's Ainu people and local wildlife such as cranes, swans, and fox, produced by Patrick Morris for the BBC. *Hokkaido* copped "Best of" for narration, soundmix, photography, music, and long TV, with Morris literally accepting a wheelbarrow full of awards on behalf of absent BBC winners. *Return of the Wolf*, filmed by Bob Landis for *National Geographic*, was voted Best of Festival by the delegates.

Most films had four public screenings at Missoula's beautifully restored classic Wilma Theater—morning, lunch, matinee, and evenings. I was impressed that even daytime programs were well-attended. "We program for primary and secondary students in the mornings, and mainly for high schoolers in the afternoons," says festival director Jen Thomas. "The matinees and evening programs are geared for families and festival attendees." This year's films were viewed by a cumulative audience of nearly 10,000, according to Thomas.

While Missoula may seem like a frontier outpost to many filmmakers, those who do make the pilgrimage often find the rewards far exceeding their expectations. For starters, there is the opportunity to screen a cross-section of some of the best current wildlife docs from around the globe—either on a monitor with a VCR, or on a large screen with the latest digital projector. If you want to know who is doing what subjects, there's a good chance you'll find out at IWFF—except for those films that rely heavily on animal actors and other contrivances. "You don't manipulate animals. You don't stake out prey to get a predation shot. You don't mess around with nests and disturb life. You don't fake," says Amy Hetzler, retiring IWFF executive director. What distinguishes the films selected as finalists at IWFF, she says, is "the honesty of the end product."

IWFF's ethics hark back to its founding by wildlife biologist Charles Jonkel 23 years ago. "We started this festival to celebrate and encourage good wildlife filmmaking," Jonkel recalls. "It was partly in response to the poor quality of many wildlife films being made then. We hoped to encourage filmmakers to produce accurate films which educate, communicate, and entertain, and to encourage filmmak-

ers to try more subjects, including insects and birds." He continues, "Since then, we've added goals like ecological and environmental advocacy and cultural sensitivity to our wish list. Along the way, we've resisted temptations to become bigger and more commercial. It's been a struggle to stay independent, keep our community roots, and stick to our goals, but that's what keeps us honest and sets us apart from the rest."

Nevertheless, IWFF has attracted at least a few celebrity sponsors over the years, like actress Andie MacDowell and CNN's Ted Turner, and is currently seeking others to help promote next year's festival.

Eschewing corporate media sponsorship and its pressure for big names has enabled IWFF to become a major proving ground for independents and a launching pad for newcomers. "Many top wildlife filmmakers got their start here—Chip Houseman, Bob Landis, and Shane Moore, to name a few," says Jonkel. "Because we're small, it's the kind of place where beginners can mingle with veterans and pick up a lot from each other, including jobs."

Furthermore, IWFF's independence attracts at least some of the major players, like National Geographic, Discovery, BBC, and PBS—but not to the point that they dominate the winners circle, as they sometimes do at larger festivals. This makes IWFF a unique proving ground for big and small fish alike. Here independents working without the benefit of $500,000-plus budgets can actually come away with more than encouraging words and honorable mentions.

IWFF also strives to enable filmmakers to broaden and sharpen their skills by accenting the pragmatic in the panel sessions, field trips, and workshops packed into the long week. The 2000 agenda accented the nuts and bolts of wildlife filmmaking, with panels dedicated to storytelling, editing, sound production, pitching, dealmaking, and new media. There were multiple sessions dealing with HD production, including a half-day hands-on HD production workshop, hosted by Sony and Panasonic. Both companies also exhibited some of their current HD cameras, decks, and monitors, providing a rare opportunity for personalized, ad hoc tutorials. I came away more enlightened tech-





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nically after a couple of relaxed tutorials at IWFF than after longer discussions in the helter skelter of NAB the week before.

The beauty of IWFF is its openness, where even raw newcomers are welcome. One way to break in is by taking a week-long course given by 20-year BBC veteran Jeffrey Boswall. Offered the week preceding the festival, the course covers many esoteric aspects of wildlife filmmaking, including psychological fitness, marital challenges, financial requirements and prospects, and academic background and skill sets needed. Boswall is assisted by guest filmmakers, mainly independents.

A first at IWFF 2000 was two sessions dedicated to conservation and television. The focus was on the challenge of keeping conservation content in wildlife docs destined for TV in more than a token way. The discussion covered alternative ways of using the production process to positively impact species and habitats being filmed, e.g. by making footage available to collaborating scientists and environmental organizations for scientific and educational purposes and by making dubs of finished programs available to developing nations, where purchase of broadcast rights may be implausible. Who should cover these additional costs was a key question. Possible solutions ranged from incorporating such costs into production budgets from the get-go, to a separate "Robin Hood Fund" drawn from minor line-item deductions from major blue-chip documentary budgets.



Stepping pretty at the fest's Wild Walk Parade.

A key concern was how to deal effectively with broadcasters preoccupied with ratings and the bottom line. "How can we get our message out if broadcasters won't put these types of programs on the air?" panelist Vanessa Schultz questioned. Using innovative styles was one approach. Another was to formally organize Filmmakers for Conservation (FFC), an association of wildlife filmmakers and colleagues that began informally last fall at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. FFC was partly a response to a tendency among programmers to treat the natural world as if it existed in a vacuum—minus mankind—with wildlife and wild places portrayed as timeless and unthreatened by civilization. Many delegates seemed stymied by this ongoing dilemma and the difficulty of breaking through the impasse. Several filmmakers volunteered to bring this discussion to Britain at Wildscreen 2000, which takes place in early October. "The consensus seems to be to organize soon and that this shouldn't be just an American thing," said filmmaker/panelist Tim Stott.

Any film festival worth its salt must have ample opportunities for hobnobbing with colleagues and commissioning editors. While IWFF is a bit lean on the latter, the 'suits' who did attend seemed genuinely accessible, candid, and open to proposals. At least a few deals were in the air and may have hatched at the festival. This was perhaps coaxed along by the relaxed collegial atmosphere at the daily receptions. And possibly it was nursed further by drafts of Moose Drool, a tasty stout brewed by Brad Johnson, an IWFF board member and owner of Big Sky Brewing. A longtime festival sponsor, Johnson has supplied and personally poured countless steinfuls of his beer, enabling one and all to wind down from the day's discussions and debates before ambling over to the Wilma for the evening's screenings. "Entertainment doesn't necessarily have to be vacuous, and education doesn't have to be bone dry," he says. "Instead you can blend them into a fine black and tan brew." I raise my half pint in total agreement.

Carl Mrozek [eagleye@pce.net] is a wildlife filmmaker and owner of Eagle Eye Media HD in Buffalo, New York.

Going To Market in Marseilles

The Sunny Side of the Doc Film Market

BY HENRY LEWES



Contemplating Marseilles' Gulf of Lions at Sunny Side of the Doc.

MOST PEOPLE DON'T NEED AN EXCUSE TO visit the French Riviera during the glorious month of June. But if you're a workaholic documentary filmmaker, Sunny Side of the Doc provides all the excuse you'll ever need.

This annual film market, now in its eleventh year, took place June 21-24 in the Palais du Pharo, a modern business center, high above the big Mediterranean port of Marseilles. As usual, it attracted a hefty crowd of documentary movers and shakers. Altogether there were 225 exhibitors, 368 producers and distributors, and 223 commissioning editors from 21 countries. By now, the market is a well-oiled machine, running an excellently manned information desk, a large theater, press and administrative offices, and several auditoriums. An attractive café, extending onto an outdoor terrace, provided a good meeting place for business discussions. Spread throughout the building were dozens of exhibition stands, by far the largest number being French, while some, like the Dutch and Danish, were shared by several small companies.

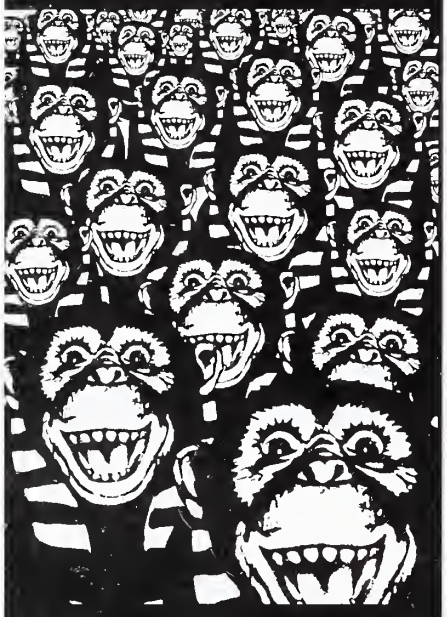
The market lasted only four days, yet the range of activities and services it offered was remarkable. There were daily "Information Breakfasts," at which major broadcasters, such as Discovery Channel and the UK's Channel Four, spoke on subjects like "How to Sell to Theme Channels" or "What to Invest in the Development of a Project." There were forums and conferences ranging from "The Documentary in Japan" to "How to Approach the South American Market." Under the series title of "30 Minutes to Understand," senior broadcasting representatives outlined their requirements and responded to questions from the floor. With such a mixture of participants and events, one question naturally arises. What sort of filmmaker is Sunny Side aimed at?

From the kind of forums on offer, it seems clear that the intention is to attract well-established professionals who could benefit from being better informed about broad developments in the industry. Subjects such as "The European Commission's initiatives in support of audiovisual programs on the environment," "The Documentary in South America," "HD in Europe," and "Documentary and the World Wide Web," though interesting in themselves, were more concerned with national broadcasting strategies than with the nitty gritty of buying and selling. Moreover, quite a number of meetings were private or of special interest to particular groups, such as a "European Broadcasting Union Conference" and French and Danish co-production breakfasts.

Of broader interest were the "30 Minutes to Understand" talks, which were given by top executives of SBS Australia, HBO, and BBC TV. Paul Hammond of the BBC was characteristically open about the problems of assaulting his vast empire. He made it clear that it might be necessary to contact the Heads of Development in a dozen different cities, one by one, to gain entry. And that with present plans to increase the number of strands, there were constant changes as to who was in charge of what. Nevertheless, he assured listeners, the BBC wanted and needed increasing numbers of co-producers but was frustrated by filmmakers who submit proposals of what they would like to do, rather than study existing programs to ensure they understood what the BBC wanted.

For prospective buyers, there was a video viewing area supported by a library of some 350 titles, cataloged under headings like "Arts Culture Shows," "Ethnology Society," "History Politics," and "Sports Adventure," with a world guide to prices. It also contained a breakdown of what broadcasters were looking for, summarized succinctly in terms like "good stories," "current affairs and society," "portraits of actors and directors," and "sex and crime."

For the most part, outside the video library documentary was talked about but rarely seen. The only public showing of films was in the evenings when programs were presented under the title of "Best of . . ." They came from Brazil, the UK, France, and the U.S. The American ones were selected and presented by Julia Query of the San Francisco International Film Festival and included Query and Vicky Funari's *Live Girls Nude Unite!*, Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne's *Blossoms of Fire*, and Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's *Pink Triangle*. This lack of live cine-

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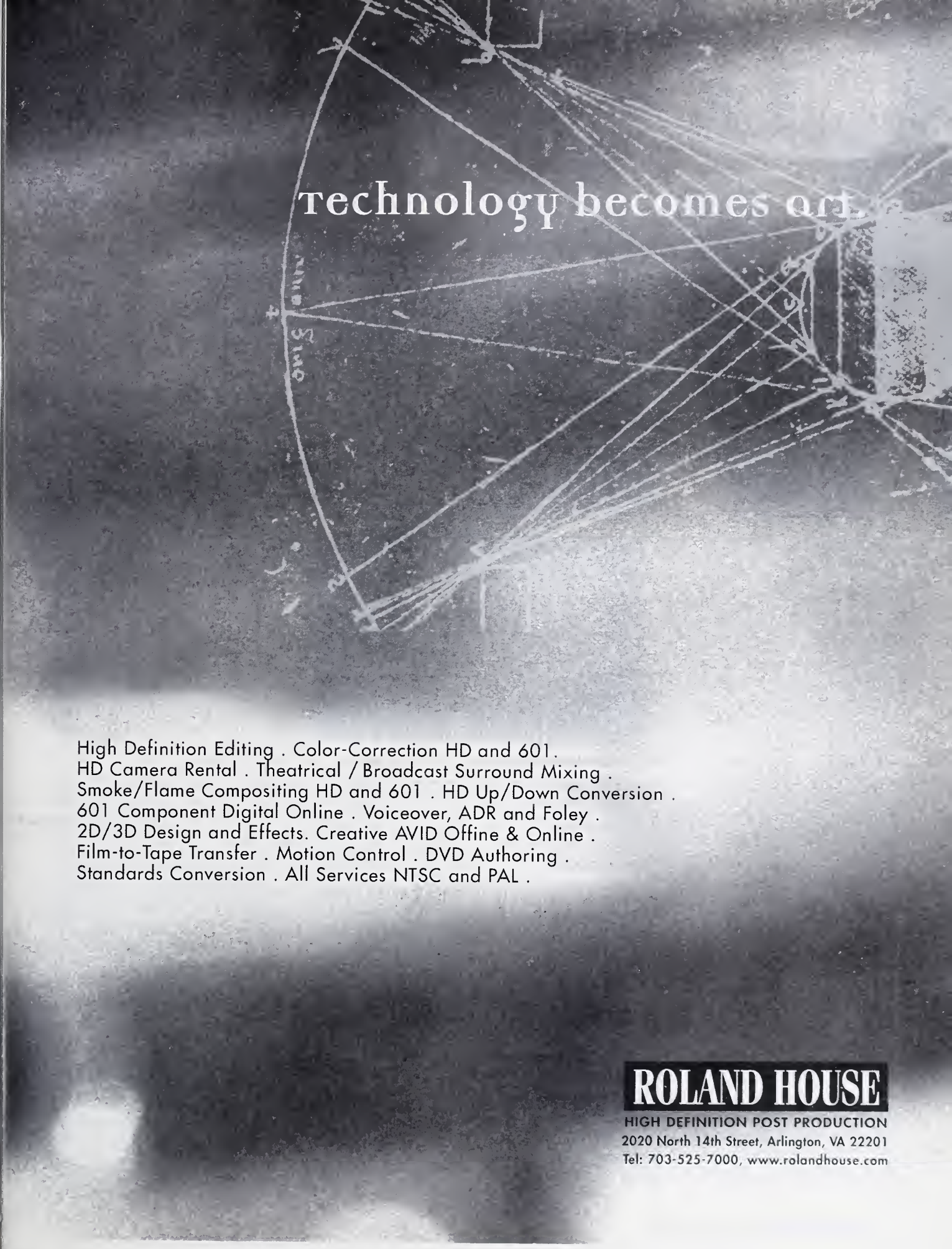
Filmmakers and buyers at one of Marseilles' many meeting sessions.

ma was a peculiarity of this year's market, since on all previous occasions the annual Festival International du Documentaire has run in parallel nearby. This year it started the day after Sunny Side closed, and consequently large numbers of filmmakers who would have been present and taken part in both were absent. The rumor was that this was due to a disagreement between the two organizations, but whatever the reason, both were impoverished as a result.

Chatting to buyers and filmmakers, it soon became clear how variable and odd were individual experiences. A French director, wanting to sell an idea to a South American co-producer, was frustrated to discover that he would have to route it through a Spanish or Portuguese production company. A German producer thought the lack of American buyers might be due to the Banff, Avignon, and Zagreb festivals all overlapping or being too close in time to this one. Susan Siegel, of the New York-based Global Action Project, said that she was the only U.S. producer present. She was looking for distributors for her film series about teenagers separated by political divides, as in Ireland, Bosnia, and Israel, working together towards solutions. Based on her first meetings, she felt she was going to be quite successful. A Danish producer was trying to distribute a documentary that explained to children what the experience of going into hospital is like. Her efforts included wandering the market with a bandaged doll, distributing her publicity leaflets by hand. She wished there were a regular "happy hour" to help her mingle with buyers in the evenings. A Swiss producer who had 12 films in the video library thought she would make half a dozen sales. "But for peanuts," she observed. "What you need in this business is to live with a partner who can pay the rent!"

Should Sunny Side open next year in the company of the Festival International du Documentaire (as was announced by the market director in his closing address), it will no doubt return to its good old form and provide more opportunities for meeting with buyers and other filmmakers. This year, since the market closed at seven and there are no cafés nearby, the pleasant and useful evening socializing that's common to most festivals was lacking. However, for those who needed an evaluation of the future requirements of national broadcasters, along with information on the likely impact of the developing technologies, Sunny Side was a useful place to be.

Henry Lewes is a film journalist who has reported on festivals for such publications as Cineaste, Filmmaker, International Documentary Magazine, *and many other film magazines.*



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MTV's reel world

BY AMY GOODMAN


Lauren Lazin, News and Documentaries Executive Producer and Vice President.

THE MUSIC NETWORK BEGINS AN EXPANSION OF ITS NEWS & DOCUMENTARY DEPARTMENT.



LAST APRIL, MTV ANNOUNCED THAT the name of their News and Specials department would be changed to News and Documentaries, confirming for anyone who hadn't noticed that documentary is all the rage. According to Lauren Lazin, vice president/executive producer of News and Documentaries, the name change heralds the department's proactive commitment to making a new home for documentary on television. Within the next two years, Lazin says, the department will double its documentary output and produce more documentary series and campaigns like *Choose or Lose*, *Sex in the '90s*, and *True Life*, which have proved so successful for the network. "The other big changes," says Lazin, "are that we will pursue different kinds of storytelling—less long-form news reports, more character-driven documentaries. And we hope to program more documentary movies made by out-of-house, independent filmmakers—longer pieces done in a more filmmaking style."

When most people think of MTV documentaries, they probably think of the extremely popular *The Real World*, which MTV calls a "real life soap opera" instead of a documentary series. (For those who purposefully ignore pop culture phenomena, *The Real World* is an MTV series that throws a group of young, pretty people together in a house, prays for drama, and records it. Since its premiere in 1992, it has had devoted followers and enviable ratings.) Lazin stresses that her department does not produce *The Real World* and *Road Rules* (which follows the same concept as *The Real World*, but on the road), but she credits those shows for "invigorating the documentary art form" by inviting viewers to appreciate reality as entertainment. She believes that MTV viewers' familiarity with these "real life soap operas" contributed to the appreciation and success of the few long-form, cinema verité documentaries that she ushered on air in the last year. Such films—including Banks Tarver's *I'm a Pro Wrestler*, Liz Garbus and Alison Ellwood's *The Travellers*, and Arnold Shapiro's *Scared Straight '99*—had a radically different style from *Real World*, but they garnered consistently high ratings, which surprised and pleased the network.

Good ratings are one reason why MTV is so into documentaries these days. "*The Travellers* did much better with viewers than everyone expected," says Banks Tarver, supervising producer of MTV's *True Life* series and producer-director of the series' 1999 hit film *I'm a Pro Wrestler*. "Before *Travellers*, when *Wrestler* aired, we'd been doing some verité pieces, but none that were one-and-a-half hours long, like *Wrestler*," Tarver says. "Everyone [at MTV] was nervous with *Wrestler*—that the scenes were too long, that it was too character driven. But the viewers loved it."

"The idea that MTV supports you going to festivals, doing outreach, getting a theatrical opening is very appealing. A lot of people in television are just concerned with their broadcast."
— Producer Liz Garbus

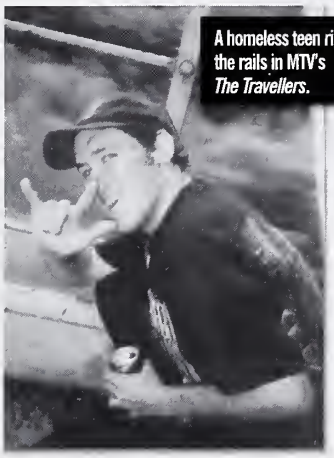
I'm a Pro Wrestler and *The Travellers*, which aired as a "True Life Movie of the Week," are character-driven, straightforward verité pieces that do not have hosts, heavy narration, or famous people. *The Travellers* tells the story of a group of vagabond train-hopping kids, who drink and drug unto death or quit travelling to settle down. *I'm a Pro Wrestler* profiles an amalgam of wrestlers—two WWF big-hitters, a wrestler who is past his prime, and a kid who wants the glory but hates wrestling camp. Both films move with a filmic rhythm rather than that of a music video, and there are no contrivances or games; the filmmakers just follow the subjects around in their natural habitats. "MTV learned great lessons about what can work stylistically from those shows," Tarver says, "and I can't tell you how open MTV is to this kind of filmmaking now."

Lazin says that another reason to expand documentary programming is to give MTV more opportunity to exert itself as an advocate for youth. In recent years, the network's social documentaries have won Peabody Awards, Cable Ace Awards, special honors from organizations like NAACP, Planned Parenthood, GLAAD, and most gratifyingly for Lazin, the docs have educated and involved viewers. "They call the 800 num-

bers we post, they go to the chat rooms; they really see the network as their own."

Ultimately, however, it is MTV's faith in Lazin's programming vision and her goal to make MTV a creative safe haven for documentary filmmakers in the cable universe that yielded the further expansion of the network's doc department.

Lazin came to MTV 14 years ago, after completing the Stanford graduate documentary program and directing an award-winning film about flappers. She took a job at MTV in a department called Longform ("which meant anything longer than three minutes"). A filmmaker at heart and cognizant of the network's programming potential, she approached the news department and suggested doing "shows about social issues." Among the topics she suggested was *Sex in the '90s*, which became a successful decade-long series for MTV and proved that Lazin was on to something. Stylistically, Lazin says, the original documentary shows were "a 50/50 split between entertainment projects and more gritty docs." In the early years, she says, "we put our programming in pop packaging so the viewers didn't feel like they were doing homework. The emphasis was on drawing the viewers in, creating an audience for the art form, so we had a lot of current music and occasional celebrities on the shows. We used to call those docs social issues you could dance to." Those were the days, Lazin recalls, "when people wrote 'an MTV "documentary" ' in quotation marks." Lazin's goal for MTV's documentary programming is to make documentaries—with no quotation marks—that cover youth issues like sexuality, racism, violence, and drug abuse, and to invest them with artistic integrity, pushing style, format, and subject to the limit.



A homeless teen rides the rails in MTV's *The Travellers*.

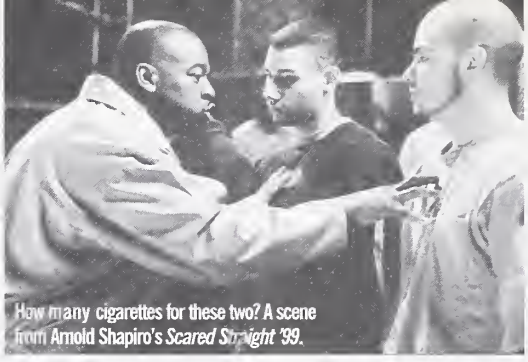
So what does MTV want from documentary filmmakers? This year, producers working mostly out of MTV's Times Square corporate offices will make somewhere between 50 to 75 documentaries. Most of them will be produced in house by MTV staff and "perma-lancers," and they will be about music or the music industry. This breed of documentary includes *Ultrasound*, a series about the hottest musicians of the moment, and *Diary*, a veritéish day-to-day series about viewers' favorite celebrities. Aside from these series, roughly a third of this year's docs will be about issues that affect young peoples' lives, and they will air as specials, series, or "pro-social" campaigns. For many of these projects, Lazin will solicit collaborative relationships with outside filmmakers.

Lazin can not yet say exactly how many of these new out-of-house specials and series will make it through development or pilot stage to production. "Right now," she says, "we have money for individual projects that I rally for as they come to us and excite us. We will produce pro-social campaigns—four or five docs in a year about one broad topic, like violence or the presidential election. I have a new series idea that I'd like verité filmmakers from the outside to work on. We may put together a series of documentaries of the week. We'll produce between six to twelve films for the *True Life* series. And if people bring us exciting ideas and we want to pilot them," she says, "there is some money to do that."

Filmmakers interested in pitching projects should pitch Lazin; or, for a *True Life* program, Lazin or Tarver, who will both be looking for documentary pitches that fit into the verité *True Life* series, whose past shows range from Tarver's *I'm a Pro Wrestler* to *I'm on Chrystal Meth* to *I'm a Model*. As News & Docs becomes a more series-oriented department, Lazin says, she will also be seeking new series ideas. She is particularly interested in stories that unravel over a period of time—like R.J. Cutler's *American High*, which recently aired (in part) on rival network Fox, about a year in the life of a high school. Lazin stresses that she is not just looking for ideas, but "for filmmakers who already have a project in production. For example, when Susan Koch [director of 1998 documentary *City at Peace*] came to us with a film she wants to do about a juvenile boot camp for girls, she already had the access and the subjects." That project is now slated to air as a *True Life* documentary in the spring of 2001. Lazin will accept pitches for shows from a half-hour to 90 minutes, and there is no preferred format for delivery, although most MTV docs are shot on DV by producers who direct, write, and edit their own projects. (This do-it-yourself attribute in a producer is a big bonus at MTV.) When asked what projects she does not want to do, Lazin says that she is not looking for music proposals; "most music docs we do support artists we play on the channel."

Based on conversations with Lazin, there are five discernable components that need to be present in the ideal MTV pitch. First and foremost, the film needs to be about young people and told from their point of view. Second, while MTV is "stylistically open," Lazin says, "most of our docs are fairly traditional, meaning they have beautiful b-roll, solid, linear storytelling, compelling characters." At the same time, Lazin stresses that MTV is a great place to experiment stylistically and she believes that filmmakers don't necessarily have to come up with a flashy "bag of tricks" they think MTV wants. Music is another crucial element, and Lazin emphasizes that "the filmmaker has to be open to the music our viewers like. Music," she explains, "is part of our viewers' lifestyle so it's not just an afterthought; it's part of the creation of the piece." On subject, Lazin is clear that she is looking for films about a subculture or alternative world that you don't see on other networks, or a topic that's been covered but to which the filmmaker brings a unique viewpoint. For example, this year's *True Life* series will include a doc on Ecstasy. Last but not least, Lazin is looking for personal stories and interesting characters. Asked what recent independent documentaries might have been appropriate for her department to produce, she lists Chris Wilcha's *The Target Shoots First*, Nina Davenport's *Always a Bridesmaid*, and Tod Lending's *Legacy*.

There are only a few independents who have produced feature-length documentaries for MTV so far—among them Liz Garbus and Allison Ellwood, producer-director team behind *The Travellers*, and Arnold Shapiro, producer of *Scared Straight '99*.



How many cigarettes for these two? A scene from Arnold Shapiro's *Scared Straight '99*.

The consensus among these filmmakers is that so far, MTV is a filmmaker-friendly place to work.

Garbus and Ellwood were almost finished making *Travellers* when MTV called. "We had been shooting the film guerilla-style for two years on our own," Garbus says. Ellwood, an Emmy-award-winning filmmaker who has produced documentaries for *Frontline*, HBO, and Discovery, was the proverbial DIY filmmaker—shooting, mixing sound, editing the project, and directing with Garbus. The two financed the film themselves, shooting on any handy miniDV camera until they were ready for postproduction and needed more money. Around that time, Garbus began talking to Tarver and Lazin, who were interested in commissioning something from her, and she mentioned the *Travellers* project, which as it turns out, was perfect for MTV.

Garbus, director of Academy Award-nominated *The Farm: Angola U.S.A*, which was originally produced for A&E, was impressed with what she called Lazin's "broad vision of the life of a documentary." "I've worked with a lot of executives and not all of them get behind films the same way Lauren does," she says. "The idea that MTV supports you going to festivals, doing outreach, getting a theatrical opening is very appealing. Lauren looks at a long strategy to get maximum exposure for your film and a lot of people in television are just concerned with their broadcast."

Shapiro's *Scared Straight* '99, which MTV commissioned and fully funded, was a follow-up to his 1979 Academy Award-winning documentary, *Scared Straight*, which took a verité look at a program at the New Jersey State Prison in which tough-talking lifers tell at-risk youths about the harsh realities of prison life. The show aired as part of the 1999 MTV campaign series called *Fight for Your Life: Take a Stand Against Violence*. "I had access to the prison and ownership of the title, so they probably gave me a lot more control over the process and the product because of that," Shapiro says. "Regardless, I'd have to say it was one of the smoothest, easiest working relationships I've had with executives and with a network." Shapiro calls the publicity and promotion support he got for the film "the best I've experienced from a cable network to date," and he was equally impressed with the dedication MTV exhibited to community outreach. "Since this film could have a life-saving impact on young people," Shapiro says, "it was incredibly gratifying to screen it on *the* network that young people watch."

One of the biggest differences between the original *Scared Straight* and the MTV *Scared Straight* '99 is that the MTV version has music and the original did not. "They sent us candidate CDs that they pre-selected, and we chose the music we wanted from those," Shapiro says. Music was also a crucial component in the making of *The Travellers*. Garbus and Ellwood wanted to make their own music licenses with Tom Waits, who was, in their eyes, the only creative choice for the film. MTV agreed and, Ellwood says, "we had creative control of the music, which was nice."

There was consensus among the filmmakers that while MTV has final cut of the shows, there is limited editorial nagging from the top. Garbus recalls that during the editorial process of *The Travellers*, "the only voices I heard were Lauren's and the legal department's." Lazin says it is important to her that "there is regular, open communication throughout so there are no heartbreaking revisions at the end." Tarver believes that working with MTV, "if you capture a good story, you get enormous freedom to make the piece you want to make. MTV is a commercial network with one eye on the ratings," he says, "but *I'm A Pro-Wrestler* was not about superstars; it was about guys on the low end of the industry trying to become successful. I got caught up in their personal stories and I got enormous freedom anyway. I did not have to use a lot of music or fast cuts, and I got to let the scenes really play out."

Asked what kind of contracts and deals MTV is offering, Lazin says that so far, "we decide what kind of deals we can offer on a case-by-case basis. We are open to all kinds of deals, from licensing to fully funding a project." As for copyrights, Lazin says, "obviously, if MTV pays for the whole thing, we'll want to own all the rights." But while MTV owns the version of a film broadcast on the channel, Lazin says she is open to allowing for other versions of films to be produced for festivals, theatrical distribution, or foreign broadcast.

MTV's budgets, Lazin says, are "competitive within the cable world." Finishing funds, matching funds, licensing deals, and co-productions are all possibilities for outside filmmakers. Garbus and Ellwood, for example, own the rights for *The Travellers* and MTV has a licensing agreement which allows for a window of one year during which MTV can broadcast the show a limited number of times. "MTV is a network used to producing their own original programming," Garbus says. "Negotiating the contract for *The Travellers* with them was like inventing the wheel. They did not have precedents." Basically, says Lazin, "we're open."

"It's a great time to be a documentary filmmaker," Lazin says, sitting in her corner office, and she would know. "When I got to New York, I met all my documentary idols and I saw that none of them knew how they were going to fund their next project or send their kids to college. That was before cable exploded." These days, with the proliferation of cable outlets, documentary filmmakers have a greater chance of making a living. And with the gradual addition of Lazin's News & Documentaries to the roster of documentary-programming cable departments, filmmakers may have another place to go on the pitching rounds. "In the future, says Garbus, "I would go to MTV with something I really cared about. I'm hoping that with the success Lauren had last year, she'll get more institutional support and be able to start doing a whole range of projects. All you need is someone who has a belief in the process and some power." Will MTV be a home for cutting-edge indie filmmakers? Cross your fingers.

Amy Goodman is a freelance writer and a documentary film producer

PHOTO: D. PARER & E. PARER-COOK, OPPOSITE, COURTESY FILMMAKERS

Gearing Up!

A low budget DV rig for a two-person crew.

BY STEVE BOGNAR



SHOOTING DOCUMENTARIES HAS NEVER been more affordable. Back in the day, an hour's worth of 16mm film, processing, and workprinting used to run $1,400. Now an hour-long mini-DV cassette costs $10. This low cost opens the door to living with a story for years, especially if you have no crew to schedule and pay.

Julia Reichert and I have been shooting a documentary on mini-DV since July 1997. It's about kids fighting cancer, and it's become the biggest project we've ever worked on. So far, we've shot 380 hours of tape. And like many low-budget documentary filmmakers with time but no money, we're a two-person crew, one of us operating camera, the other running sound.

We've made plenty of mistakes along the way and have learned a lot about shooting documentary with digital equipment. We also received great advice from many colleagues, most notably veteran documentarian Pam Yates, who offered much wisdom. So here's an intro to a good working model for low-budget documentary teams.

IN DOCUMENTARY, GOOD AUDIO USUALLY MATTERS MORE THAN A good picture. If we were a big budget operation, we'd be recording our sound onto a separate DAT machine. But we're low-budget, so we record sound right onto our mini-DV camera tapes.

We use a Sony VX-1000, which features two separate tracks of audio. We try to fill both audio tracks to cover ourselves. If one track gets a moment of bad sound, the other should still be okay.

We started out tethered together by a microphone cable running from the sound person to the camera. Almost immediately, we realized how frustrating this was. We kept tripping over each other and tangling up the folks we were taping. We soon started using a radio transmitter/receiver to send audio from the sound person to the camera person. This allows us to be on opposite sides of a room, getting the boom and the camera in the best possible angles.

Good mic placement is, of course, the first step to getting good sound. Getting the mic close to the people you're taping makes a huge difference. But documentarians will differ on the question of whether or not to use a boom pole. Some argue it's distracting and scary, this scythe swooping about over people's heads. Others say it's a necessary intrusion.

We use a boom pole. We figure the camera already freaks people out, so a boom pole doesn't make much of a difference. Over time, folks get used to the camera and they'll also get used to the boom pole. Meanwhile, you'll get a lot better sound.

Whether to use a wide angle lens is another choice you face. We use one that mounts on the front of our camera, but we shoot in small rooms and crowded cars. It's tricky, because these lenses can easily distort a person's face, making everyone look like they're in a hallucination scene from a music video. I know I've shot too close to people, and we're going to be dealing with looming noses in the editing room.

In the best circumstances, we use three microphones: one on the boom pole, another on top of the camera, and a radio mic clipped to whomever we're following. The boom pole and the radio mic both go into a portable sound mixer worn by the sound recordist. The sound person tends to these two microphones, since they get mixed together forever as they leave the mixer and head for the camera. The microphone atop the camera goes into its own audio channel, on the DV tape. It stays separate from the audio being sent from the sound person.

We played around with a few types of mics before finding the combo we now use. On the boom pole, we use a mini-shotgun mic. This highly directional mic eliminates a lot of peripheral sounds. Since the sound person can really angle it in, we get good voice clarity even in loud hospital rooms and crowded gatherings.

On top of the camera, we use a cardioid mic, which captures a wider range of sound. Since the camera person can't usually aim the camera at a particular mouth just to get better mic placement, the wider grasp of a cardioid makes more sense.

We both wear headphones, and heavy ones at that. Anytime you're using microphones, problems will happen—shorting cables, dead batteries, radio interference. You gotta know what you're getting.

What follows are illustrations of how the gear we've bought and borrowed breaks out.

Steven Bognar's latest film, Picture Day, *premiered at Sundance this year and recently won Best Documentary Short at the Florida Film Festival.*

Cardioid microphone. You should have a good mic on top of the camera. We use a Sennheiser ME64, which costs $360. It runs on one AA battery. Shure makes a good windscreen for it, the A81WS Foam Windscreen ($30), but it's very bulky, making the camera look much bigger with it on. However, if you're shooting outdoors, you've gotta have it.

3-chip digital video camera. We use the Sony VX-1000 (now succeeded by the Sony VX-2000. Other cameras in the same ballpark include the Sony PD-150, the Canon XL1 and the Canon GL1). These cost between $3,000-4,000. Anybody shooting documentary will need extra camera batteries. I'd recommend getting 3 extras, at about $100 each.

Short mic cable. 18 inches is good; you need it to go from the top of the camera to the audio adapter box on the bottom. $24.

Wide angle adapter lens. Good if you're shooting in tight confines. We use the Century DS65CV, which costs $420.

Shock mount with shoe. To mount the cardioid mic, you need something with rubber band suspension to isolate the microphone from the camera. The shoe is what clips into the top of the camera. Beyer makes a good one for $25.



Audio adapter box. BeachTek innovated these boxes, which provide two XLR microphone inputs, so you can plug in two good microphones. The box screws in on the bottom of the camera. A mini-plug runs out of the box and plugs into the camera, thus overriding the camera's built-in mic. (This audio adapter is not needed if you're shooting with the PD-150 or the XL-1.) About $220.

Butt bags. Yeah, I know, the '80s are so over. But for the documentarian, these fanny packs will always be in fashion. Extra camera batteries, extra mic batteries, extra mini-DV tapes, gum—you need 'em all. I usually look like a total geek with my 3 or 4 butt bags. But you can't be too prepared.

Radio receiver. The camera person receives the audio sent from the sound person using this box. We wear ours on a belt pouch, using a 3 foot cable to run the sound up to the camera. Other folks mount theirs onto the camera, but it starts to weigh the camera down. We use the Sony WWR-810 A68, which costs $792.

PHOTO: J. REICHERT AND (OPPOSITE) S. BOGNAR

Mini-shotgun mic.
This works like an audio telescope, focusing on the specific sounds it's aimed at. We use a Sennheiser ME66, $430, which runs on one AA battery. The MZW66 windscreen is an extra $37. You need the windscreen even indoors, because swinging that pole around will catch wind noise.

Good headphones. Don't use walkman-style gear, even though they are more comfortable. Studio headphones eliminate a lot of outside noise, allowing you to really hear what you're getting. We use Sony MDR-7506, which run $80.





Ponytail holders. These ties with plastic marbles hold the microphone cable on the boom pole. Available at any five and dime.

Boom pole & shock mount. A good 10 foot boom pole will do in most situations. Beyer makes an aluminum pole for about $150. Graphite poles are lighter and easier on the arms, but they start at $300. Audio Technica and P.S.C. make shock mounts for around $60. You must have a shock mount to isolate the microphone from handling noise.



Radio mic. The subject you're following wears this—a radio transmitter with a lavalier microphone attached—clipping the transmitter to a belt or waistband. It transmits back to the sound person. We use the Sony WR7-820A (now replaced by the 822A) transmitter, combined with a Sony ECM-77 lavalier microphone. Together they cost $810.

Portable sound mixer. The sound person needs this to hear their audio, ride audio levels, and mix 2 or 3 microphones together. The sound from the boom pole and radio mic comes into this box and leaves as one signal, heading for the camera. We use a Shure mixer, the FP33, $1200. This runs on three 9-volt batteries.



Radio receiver. This box receives the sound from the radio mic that your subject is wearing. The sound goes from this box into the portable sound mixer. We use the Sony WWR-810 A68, which costs $792.

Radio transmitter. This box takes all the sound from the mixer and sends it over to the camera person. We use the Sony WR7-820A M77 transmitter (now replaced by the 822A), which runs $700.

Microphone cable. This should be long enough to reach your subjects, but not so long that you constantly tangle yourself in it. 10 to 15 feet is a good range. About $20.

FILMMAKERS, ESPECIALLY DOCUMENTARIANS, ARE WELL VERSED IN THE TERRITORY behind the camera, yet few can speak firsthand about what it's like on the other side—how it feels to have your life treated as raw material for a nonfiction narrative, to be scrutinized and analyzed and reinterpreted by a stranger, to become an unwitting celebrity and contend with a screen image that may always loom larger than your self-image. We don't often hear from the subjects of documentaries about this experience and why they chose to go through with it.

Perhaps more than anyone, two people who are qualified to speak on this matter are Nick Hitchon and Lance Loud. Featured in the *Up* series and *An American Family*, respectively—the prototypes of the character-driven documentary series—their lives have been changed in unforeseeable ways as a result of their acquiescence to the filmmakers so many years ago.

BY THOMAS WHITE

LIFE IN A FISHBOWL

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A DOCUMENTARY FILM SUBJECT





Jackie, Lynn, and Sue (l to r) at 28, hold photos of themselves at ages 21, 14, and 7 in *35 Up*.

COURTESY FILM FORUM; OPPOSITE: COURTESY NICK HITCHON

7-Up: The *Ur* Text

Back in 1963, London-based Granada Television hired Michael Apted as a researcher on a documentary, the premise of which was to examine the English class system through the eyes of a cross-section of seven-year-old English children. What began as a project specific to England and its peculiar mores evolved over the next three decades into a fascinating study of ordinary people growing up and coping with life's vicissitudes—in front of an audience of millions. The *Up* project was never intended to go beyond the first episode, but Apted decided to visit the participants seven years later to document how their lives were taking shape as teenagers. He has since returned every seven years, and most of the original 14 subjects have agreed to carry out what they'd started.

All are "ordinary" people, yet they seem to hold a visceral connection with viewers. By virtue of their grudging willingness to continue in this lifelong anthropological enterprise, the Uppers have attained an odd sort of celebrity—living a decidedly un-celebrity life in a most celebrity fashion, in front of the camera. As Nick Hitchon, now a professor of physics at University of Wisconsin, notes in the film, "My ambition as a scientist is to be more famous for doing science than for being in this film, but unfortunately there's no way that's ever going to happen."

In a telephone interview, Hitchon, who was born and raised in the Yorkshire region of England, explained why he has continued with the project: "Since I've been doing it for so long, I'm not going to drop it on a

whim. It does seem to me like it's almost a piece of history—not just my history, but other people's. The whole thing is like a time capsule, so I do want, in some sense, to launch my little contribution to the time capsule, even if some aspects of it don't really please me as much as I'd like."

But even though he's willing to allow Apted into his life every seven years, Hitchon has developed several self-protective mechanisms. First, he stopped watching the series after *28-Up*. "Basically the editing process and the use of voiceover and commentary by the filmmaker can often convey an impression that the participants don't really think they put in there," he says delicately. "Even if the series presented the best side of me it possibly could, I would find it really painful to look at these images."

Second, Hitchon has learned how and when to hold back. "I'm talking about extremely embarrassing subjects. They stick you in front of the camera and say, 'Tell us about such and such.' And it's either the most painful thing that's ever happened or it's some excruciating question about your very private life. I have a number of different editing mechanisms. I make a real effort not to criticize anybody else; that's number one. Number two, I do tend to play my cards a little bit close to my chest. The more encroaching or embarrassing it is, the more I'm likely to edit."

Yet Hitchon, like most of his fellow participants, has gamely continued with the series, in part because he has seen some benefit to this involvement. "It has made me think that unusual things can happen in this life," he allows, "and it's helped me be more adventurous. Where I grew up, I didn't have a vision of what the rest of the world looked like that was more than 20 miles away, but my exposure to this thing has made me think, well, okay, there is a world out there that I maybe could get access to. So it did make me a little more bold about trying to go a bit further afield."

An American Family: A Cautionary Tale

Years of experience with this uniquely sporadic series has allowed Hitchon the time to learn how to cope with *Up*'s demands and side effects. The Loud family, in contrast, never had that luxury. When *An American Family* was broadcast on PBS as a 12-part weekly series in 1973, none of its subjects had an inkling of how the series would grab the public's attention and change their lives forever.

At the time, public broadcasting was a fairly nascent notion, as was the idea of a multi-part vérité series. PBS was not even available in Santa Barbara, the Louds' hometown, until the series aired. "We thought it was really a very odd academic, eccentric, never-to-be noticed project," says Lance Loud, then the family's teenaged son, "but we were glad to be in the crosshairs of the camera."

An American Family was a project conceived and produced by Craig Gilbert; Susan and Alan Raymond are officially credited as "Filmmakers." It was intended to examine the dynamics of a family in a particularly volatile time in America's history and get a truer sense of the family paradigm than what the mass media was offering. As Craig Gilbert notes in his essay "Reflections on *An American Family II*," "I theorized in my proposal for the series that if you could stay with a family, any family, for a long enough period of time, something interesting would be revealed about why men and women in their various roles were having such a difficult time in the America of the early seventies."

When the filmmakers approached the Louds about being the subject of this study, Lance Loud recalls, "they appealed to our vanity and to our wanting to be special. We were taking off the Me Decade. They basically gave us the line, 'How would you like to star in the greatest home movie ever made?' with the proviso that we didn't have to do anything, just be our little Southern California hick selves."

They agreed and opened the doors and hidden chambers of their upper-middle class household for the world to see. And despite the vérité filmmakers' desire to be a fly on the wall, observing without affecting the family's action, the camera was a presence the Louds never forgot.

"People who say they don't play to the camera are fooling themselves; you do," Loud reflects. "What you do is develop a subconscious ability to try to pump up whatever you're naturally feeling or going with at that moment and make it as cinematic as possible."

It wasn't as if the Raymonds or Gilbert didn't notice this flaunting before the camera. Indeed, they constantly reminded the Louds of the ground-rules established by both parties, but "we were the ones pushing against them," Loud maintains. "We wanted to be as outrageous or ridiculous as possible. At one point Alan said to me, 'You know, Lance, you ever thought about how people are going to think about you when they're watching?' And I just didn't care."



Nick Hitchon, one of the subjects of Michael Apted's *Up* series.

When it came to seeing the film in its final form prior to its national airing, however, Loud did care. His coming out, never an issue with his family, became a focal point of the series. "When it was pointed up that I was gay," he reflects, "it became such a huge deal as part of the series that [it] was disturbing to me. It just didn't seem to be in perspective, and that was our big complaint."

The Louds were nonetheless excited about the possibilities of the series. Everyone, filmmakers and participants, believed they were making an important statement about what the American family was in the early seventies. Nothing could have prepared them for the negative onslaught from viewers and critics, who, unaccustomed to this new form of nonfiction programming, engaged the Loud family members as if they were, yes, characters in a weekly series. And with Bill and Pat Loud divorcing on camera and Lance Loud coming out, the more conservative pundits across America—and even some liberal ones—breathed fire and brimstone about moral degradation and degeneracy. "People were shocked," Loud remembers. "And we were shocked that they were shocked. We thought people would be on our side and sympathize with the piece. We thought it was more than an American family; it was a family in

modern times responding to all the different converging moods and trends of the times. But they didn't really sympathize; they misunderstood it, thinking that we were arrogant in our stupidity. They were totally wrong."



The Louds spent a good part of the next two years defending themselves on talk shows like *Dick Cavett*. Ten years after the initial broadcast, in 1983, PBS aired Alan and Susan Raymond's *The Louds: An American Family Revisited*, which looks back on the whole experience—the series, the public backlash, and the Louds' wounded response—and brings it full circle.



The Louds, "stars" of original reality TV series *An American Family* (Lance Loud in bow tie).

Below: Nina Davenport (left), a wedding videographer, made a personal documentary about herself, her documentarian boyfriend, and her desire for a committed relationship.

Needless to say, Lance Loud gained some notoriety from the series, although he never sought it or tried to capitalize on it. In the years after the series, the gay community saw him as a hero, of sorts, for coming out to his family and to a national television audience; strangers would approach him on the streets to thank him. Reflecting on the three decades since he and his family took that fateful step, Loud muses, "Maybe it will be viewed—maybe long after reality programming as a concept has bitten the dust—that what we did was noble. I guess I could drag out my favorite Leonard Cohen line and say, 'And wasn't it a long way down and wasn't it a strange way down?' "

Always a Bridesmaid: The Tables Turned

Knowing what they know, why would filmmakers ever allow themselves to be the subject of a documentary? Personal documentaries, of course, allow a filmmaker to be both subject and director at the same time, and to retain absolute control over his or her image. But what if that's in someone else's hands?

This was the experience of filmmaker Nick Kurzon (*Superchief*, 1999) who is a key character in Nina Davenport's *Always a Bridesmaid* (2000). Davenport's documentary chronicles her search for love and commitment, as inspired by her day job as a wedding videographer. Davenport seeks answers from spinsters, friends, family, ex-flames, and flings. Looming large in the picture is her ambivalent boyfriend, Kurzon, who on screen comes off as an amiable, tousle-haired Peter Pan, ever wary of the deeper sort of relationship that Davenport is pining for.

Unlike Nick Hitchon or Lance Loud, Kurzon got to fully absorb how he came across on film while the film was being edited. Giving Davenport a hand in postproduction allowed Kurzon to witness his words and actions, again and again.

"On the one hand," he notes, "my reaction in looking at it was, 'Oh my God, how embarrassing! I can't believe I said that!' But on the other hand, I think it's good for the movie—she did capture an honesty in our discussions and our dialogues that really makes the movie better and richer, so I'm glad in a way that that's in there."

During production, his experience behind the camera enabled him to face the camera with a different sort of self-consciousness. "To the extent that I became self-conscious," Kurzon says, "it was because I knew what her process was going to be. I noticed that when she was filming me I became of conscious of the things that she wants—'Is there enough light? Are there cutaways? Am I talking towards the microphone?' I was worried about how the scene would play out for an editor."

As a couple, Davenport and Kurzon faced the challenge of reconciling the artistic relationship with the personal one. Each had its own demands. In the end, Kurzon came to appreciate how Davenport managed to get her shots without having the project dominate their lives.

"It's good documentary; it captures some aspects of the relationship, but at the same time she was at not letting it overtake the relationship," he reflects. "Looking back on it, it doesn't feel like she was filming that much. So I think she was very careful to choose, to take very seriously when she decided to film and when she decided not to film. I think she realized that because we were spending all our time together anyway, it would be easy to fall into the trap of wanting to film everything. That didn't happen; it might have become a problem for me. As it is, I didn't feel like I was under a microscope; I didn't feel like the reality was turning into a movie, or vice versa."

That's given him a new appreciation of the delicate art of documentary filmmaking, and the human courtesies a director owes to his or her subjects. "As a filmmaker now," he observes, "I think my approach is slightly more willing to engage the subject in the process of making the film. I'm a little more communicative about what I'm trying to do with the subject, how this scene might be used in a film, because I realize from being filmed how important it was for me as a subject to understand why the film was important and why my participation in it was important." While Kurzon did it the hard way, that's a lesson that every documentary director could do well to learn.

Thomas White is acting editor of International Documentary *and has also contributed to* The Hollywood Reporter, Release Print *and* IndieWIRE.

AN AMERICAN FAMILY COURTESY AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE; DAVENPORT PHOTO COUR-

kids and consent

WHEN TEENS ARE THE SUBJECT, DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS FACE SPECIAL CHALLENGES. There's the issue of consent, which involves both subjects and parents, and there's the age-old generation gap to bridge.

Recently filmmakers David Zeiger (*The Band*) and R.J. Cutler (*A Perfect Candidate*; *The War Room*) spent a year documenting the lives of young students in high schools. Working on separate projects, Zeiger filmed at his alma mater, Fairfax High School in Los Angeles, while Cutler shot at Highland Park High School in suburban Chicago. Zeiger's *Senior Year* will air on PBS in fall 2001 as a projected six-hour series, while Cutler's *American High* aired on Fox August 2 and 9 before being pulled for low ratings. (No plans for its future had been finalised at presstime.)

A project involving teens requires signed release forms from both children and parents. A few parents expressed concern about how their offsprings' images would be used, but mostly they consented. Some agreed to be on camera themselves, and some even went so far as to change their daily habits for the camera. Jet Lopez, a *Senior Year* participant, recalls, "My problem with my family is every time the camera was there it's like a picture-perfect family. The first day my cameraman was filming—the first day of school—the alarm clock goes off and I smell pancakes cooking downstairs and my dad goes, 'Here, son, do you want some syrup with that?' And I know for a fact that if that stupid camera wasn't here, my parents would not be waking up at 4 a.m. and baking."



Jeán & Maria, two of the subjects in David Zeiger's *Senior Year*.

Below: Morgan, a student at *American High*, which gave its subjects video camcorders to use.



The students took some time getting used to the camera crews and over their suspicions. Mike Landford, an *American High* subject, remembers the reactions of his peers who weren't in the film. "They were excited and they were kind of annoyed, because on weekends when [the crew] came out with me, [my friends] held back and they watched what they said. It was kind of like a dad watching over you; that's how they felt about it. But then they got used to it and actually became buddies with the film guys, and it became a lot easier."

It helped that most of the camerapeople from both projects were fairly close in age to the students, and not too removed from the high school-tempered art of hanging out. Anna Santiago, of *American High*, adds, "I guess the most important time that we spent with them was the time they didn't need to be filming. Those were the times that we got comfortable with them. So if they were only filming us during a really traumatic part of our lives, it wouldn't have been as real to me. It would've been like they were only using me to get drama, but because they were there through everything, through the boring stuff, I know that they cared more."

"The thing that was cool about the filmmakers coming in," recalls Marie Caviani, a *Senior Year* student, "is that they'd already been through high school; they'd already been through college; and they come with all this knowledge and all these experiences they shared with us. And we taught them a lot, too, because how they were in high school has changed a lot."

Meanwhile, the high school administrations were open to the projects because both filmmakers mandated the active participation of students in telling their own stories through video diary segments. This democratization of the filmmaker/participant relationship enabled the students to mine much deeper personal territory than the filmmakers ever could. "It turned out to be great," Langford recalls. "It helped me immensely in learning how film is shot and why the camera guys do what they do. In terms of video diaries, it helped the crew achieve a very personal level, because we would sometimes hold back and they couldn't quite get into our lives. The diaries let us go one-on-one with the camera and just let loose, and I think they got a lot of stuff they wouldn't have gotten if they were with us."

At presstime, the *American High* students had had the chance to screen the first two episodes. For Santiago, the two viewings triggered different reactions. "The first time I saw it," she remembers, "I was by myself and I loved it. I was so happy with it, finally seeing my life through the cameraman's eyes, how it was all put together and just the kind of story lines they went off of. But the second time, it was with the whole group. I almost started to cry; it was a lot tougher to watch it. It was hard for me to see their reactions to me and what I was doing."

As painful as it was, Santiago believes in the program's potential. "I really hope that viewers will look at us and listen to what we're saying and say, 'Yeah, I felt that way too.' Even adults watching, I hope it shows them that a lot of us have a lot going on in our lives, a lot of important adult issues that we're learning how to handle, and we're doing a good job."

— TW

Sound Suggestions

How to Get the Best Sound When Shooting Direct to Digital Video.

BY LARRY LOEWINGER

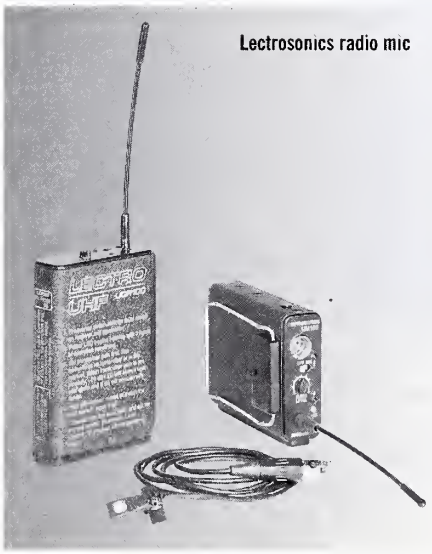
HAS THE COMPUTER REVOLUTION REALLY improved our lives? We can argue this point endlessly as change itself endlessly accelerates. But there is one corner of this vast revolution that has truly altered the production landscape for the better, and that's the introduction of digital video (DV) and its cameras.

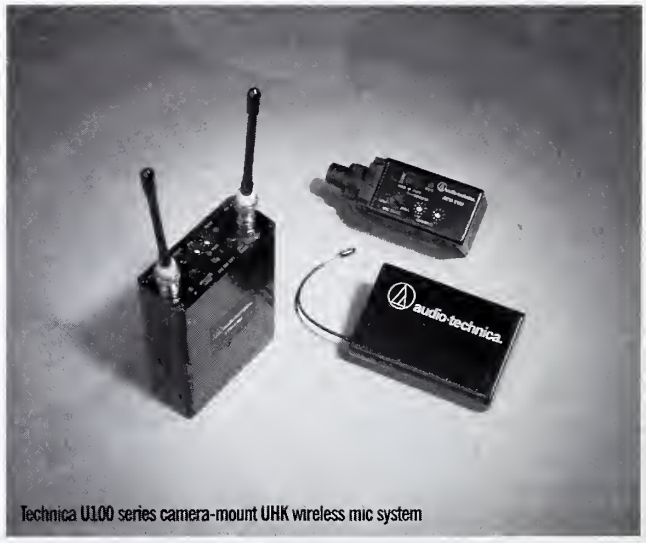
It is not that the images these cameras produce is either of broadcast quality or like film (though they are surprisingly good). Nor is that the sound they record is any better than what DAT tape recorders and postproduction editing systems can reproduce (thought this, too, is still of a surprisingly high order). What is really striking about DV cameras is the contrast between their pea size and price and the quality they deliver.

This is true in sound as well as picture—*if* you know the peculiarities and points of difficulty that are unique to digital cameras. To know where the hazards lie is the first step to better sound recording.

INTERESTINGLY, THE STORY OF DOING sound for digital video is not what you would expect—one of microphones, mixers, fishpoles, radio microphones, and the other accoutrements of sound recording. Rather it's the story of the digital cameras themselves—their audio inputs, meters, and recording capabilities. We'll focus on two cameras, Sony's DCRVX1000 and its replacement, the DCRVX2000 (www.sel.sony.com/SEL/consumer/ss5/generic/digitalvideo/minidvcamcorders/index.shtml), and Canon's XL-1 (www.canondv.com/xl1/index2.html). Canon and Sony both offer other digital cameras, but these two have come to dominate the digital video prosumer market.

Consumer, *prosumer*, and *professional* are three words that have important practical meaning for us. They refer to the design, appearance, and ultimately the expectations of what these cameras can do for us. From an audio point of view, the differences lie in the input or entry point of sound: whether the two channels of audio signal can be manipulated manually and independently of each other, and whether there is time code signal applied to the tape as the audio is being recorded.


Lectrosonics radio mic



Technica U100 series camera-mount UHK wireless mic system

A consumer camera usually has an unbalanced input with a stereo mini plug as its input connector, automatic gain, and no time code. Fully professional cameras are bigger, offer balanced audio through XLR connectors, and output and record with a time code sync reference. Between them is the prosumer model, which generally has a mini plug as its input connector, but also has switchable manual/automatic gain and sometimes a variant of time code as a sync reference. The digital video cameras being discussed here occupy this middle, prosumer range.

The stereo mini plug may be the worst audio connector ever designed for anything but home stereo applications. Yet it is the audio entry point of almost every consumer and prosumer DV camera! Mechanically fragile, it rarely makes a proper, snug fit into the camera. That makes it susceptible to hum and to audio drop outs. It provides minimal strain relief to its attached cable. If you are moving around, as in a documentary situation, the stereo mini plug connection can cause you no end of problems. Worst of all, the signal that flows through it is unbalanced.

The mating that occurs at the DV camera's audio input is the single most vulnerable connection in your audio chain

Balanced, unbalanced; why should you care? A balanced audio signal is one that is independent of ground, can travel long distances with no quality loss, and is relatively impervious to hum. Another term for balanced is electrically *floating*—above or below ground. A balanced audio line runs within a three-wire cable: two audio leads and a hum-resistant shield which is usually grounded. Virtually all of the microphones you will use—whether condenser or dynamic, shotgun or

lavalier, radio or hard wire—have balanced outputs. So far, most of the prosumer DV cameras have unbalanced, mini plug inputs. The mating that occurs at the DV camera's audio input is the single most vulnerable connection in your audio chain. It has spawned a tiny cottage industry of adapter boxes that convert your audio signal, no matter what its level, into signal the camera can accept.

"These adapter boxes," says Steve Robinson, a practiced sound engineer who has specialized in audio for video, "accomplish three important things. They include transformers which drop the input impedance, two volume controls to manipulate the left and right channels, and most importantly, a technique to create a ground connection between your external audio and the camera." At the outset there were two brands of adapter boxes—BeachTek and XLR Pro. (Canon makes its own XLR audio adapter, the MA-100, for the XL-1 camera.) BeachTek, which appears to be the only one of these two still being sold, establishes ground by screwing onto the bottom of the camera. The base plates of the Canon and Sony cameras are different. Consequently, you have to match your BeachTek adapter to the camera you use. Also, as Robinson notes, "If the camera goes on a tripod with a quick release plate, which is attached to the adapter box and the adapter box which is attached to the camera, the ground connection can slip." If this situation occurs, he recommends the generic fix—gaffer's tape.



Sennheiser's 500 series wireless units.

The DV audio standard is two channels at 16 bit audio or four channels at 12 bit audio. Sony's VX1000 can only record two channels in the camera, but it does leave room for the two additional channels to be added in postproduction. The Canon Xl-1 does record all four tracks. The notion of recording onto four separate channels or tracks sounds great, even at the 12 bit reduced rate which is okay for dialog

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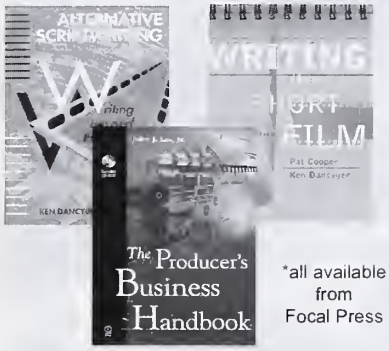
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recording. In the abstract it allows you to postpone your audio decisions and generate more flexibility for the mix. In practice, though, it may create more headaches than it's worth. The first hint is the design of your audio adapter boxes. Notice, two inputs not four. But the main reason for this, as Robinson notes, is that some of the consumer editing software and hardware that is now commonly used can't handle four audio tracks. Even though Sony introduced four-track recording in their Betacam system, it has never been very popular and nor is it likely to be in DV.

We live in a world of convenience in which the pressure to go wireless is intense.

IF YOU'RE A ONE-MAN BAND FOLLOWING your documentary subject around, you are likely to be using the camera mic or something equivalent, such as the Sennheiser ME-66 short shot gun mic, and possibly a radio microphone on your subject. [See, for example, Steve Bogar's suggested rig on page 29-31.] As outboard mics, they are connected through the BeachTek or XLR Pro adapter boxes. You are monitoring your sound through headsets and adjusting the gain of these mics at the adapter.

If your production has a bit of budget, you might have hired a cameraperson and a sound recordist who operates with a mixer. The sound recordist can hard wire his or her audio to the deck through an audio breakaway cable or else broadcast it wireless to the digital camera. The latter option sounds neat, but it raises a whole host of questions. Hard wiring through a breakaway cable—one that can be quickly split at a point near the camera—is the safer, preferable option. It gives you reasonable assurance that the signal you hear is the one being recorded onto the deck, provided you have set up a proper tone ratio between the mixer and the meter on the camera, and that, through the breakaway cable, you are monitoring the audio that is looping through the video deck. This works in any controlled situation where the camera is stationary.

In any run-around situation, whether it be dramatic or documentary, the question remains how to deliver the sound from a mixer to the camera. In many instances an audio breakaway cable can still work adequately, but we live in a world of convenience in which the pressure to go wireless is intense.

Radio microphone technology has improved exponentially over the last decade. We have advanced from first-generation radio microphones operating in the very high frequency (VHF) range that provide a fragile link between subject/actor and sound person, to ultra high frequency (UHF) diversity microphones that create a link so solid that they are replacing the ubiquitous hard wire connection between boom operator and sound mixer on feature sets. In other words, radio technology is beginning to replace the microphone cable wherever it



is used on a film or video shoot. Is this radio mic technology appropriate for the DV filmmaker? The answer is a hedged "Yes, but . . . ."

There is a new generation of inexpensive radio mics ($600-$1,200) offered by the major manufacturers, among them Audio Technica (www.audiotechnica.com/guide/wireless/index.html), Lectrosonics (www.lectrosonics.com/wireless/wireless.htm), and Sennheiser (www.sennheiser.com/rf_wireless/hf_1b001.htm), that cater to the digital video market and do the job well. Are they of sufficient quality and reliability to establish a solid wireless link between the mixed sound source and the camera? It depend on how much of a risk taker you are, since you often forego the opportunity to monitor the sound you are capturing.

"It becomes a question: Do you have a wireless return for headphone monitoring of what you have actually sent?," Robinson says. "I have personally chosen to spend the money on good wirelesses and not

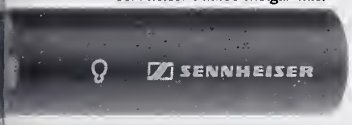


Sennheiser's newer digital 1000 series of wireless systems.

worry about an audio return when we are running around. Do I give the cameraperson headphones? Yes. Do they wear them? It depends on the cameraperson."

Serious wireless units start in the area of $2,000 and go up from there. An investment in professional wireless technology can quickly escalate to $10,000 and way beyond. Then you are left with the question Robinson raises. Who monitors the audio and how? One answer is more radio technology, like wireless headphones. A company called Comtek makes the industry standard wireless headphone system. But a wireless feed between the sound mixer and the camera and a wireless headphone return to the sound person (and anyone else, for that matter) involves more money, weight, complexity, and, most of all, more risk.

Sennheiser's ME66 shotgun mic.



There are three final issues, simple and practical, which may sound mundane but are rather important. First, Robinson recommends using right-angle mini plug, phone jack, and even XLR connectors into and out of the DV camera. Right angle connectors act as strain relief on your cables. They shrink the profile of your camera and reduce the risk of breakage on location.

Second, understand the difference between 0 dB on your mixer's VU meter, or 0 VU as it is sometimes referred to, and 0 dB on your camera's peak meter. There are two issues here: All digital audio is monitored with peak reading meters that measure the true range of your audio signal. As technology evolved, zero in the analog world became merely a warning—a serious one!—that if you didn't control your gain, trouble was close at hand. In the digital domain, zero is a cliff beyond which you have tumbled into digital distortion which sound like clicks. So tone at 0 VU on your mixer is placed somewhere between –20 dB and –12 dB on the camera meter, in any case well before 0 dB. Err on the conservative side by setting your tone at -18 dB. Even in the analog world, tone should read 8 dB less on a peak meter than on a VU meter.

Third, listen to your sound as often as you can from the audio return coming from the headphone jack of the DV camera. If you are monitoring from a mixer, Robinson advises using good quality headsets that surround and enclose your ears (circumaural). If you are working alone with the camera on your shoulder, you may want to wear open air headsets (supra-aural) that keep you aware of your immediate surroundings. The cameraperson may prefer to listen with headsets that go directly into the ear (inter-aural). Beyer (www.beyerdynamic.com), Sennheiser, and Sony are the primary headphone manufacturers. Whichever headsets you use, listen closely both to the content and the quality of the sound you are recording. Listening is the key to great sound recording. Proficiency in sound starts with a happy combination of deft technique and good technology, but it ends with what your ears hear and your brain processes.

Larry Loewinger (sohoaudio@earthlink.net) is an audio engineer and documentary producer.

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WOMEN MAKE MOVIES

BY LISSA GIBBS


Executive director Debra Zimmerman

Women Make Movies, 462 Broadway, Suite 5001, NY, NY 10013; (212) 925-0606, fax: (212) 925-2052; info@wmm.com; orders@wmm.com; www.wmm.com

Contacts: Debra Zimmerman, executive director; Maya Montanez Smukler, director of production assistance; Vanessa Domico, director of distribution & marketing.

What is Women Make Movies?
Women Make Movies is a national nonprofit media arts organization that facilitates the production, promotion, distribution, and exhibition of independent films and videotapes by and about women. Our primary program is our internationally recognized distribution service. We also assist women directors and producers through our Production Assistance Program, which provides fiscal sponsorship and other forms of assistance to emerging and established video- and filmmakers.

Who is Women Make Movies?
Debra Zimmerman, executive director; Maya Montanez Smukler, director of production assistance; Vanessa Domico, director of distribution; and Mijoung Chang, distribution coordinator, as well as seven other very hardworking staff.

Total number of employees:
11.

How, when, and why did Women Make Movies come into being?
We were founded in 1972 by Ariel Dougherty and Sheila Paige as a production collective focused on training women to be filmmakers. In the 1980s, once women had started making a significant number of films, we switched our focus to distribution. In 1983, we had 30 films in our collection and our budget was about $30,000. Now we have close to 500 films and our budget is almost $1,000,000.

You knew Women Make Movies had made it as a company when . . .
the Museum of Modern Art celebrated our 25th Anniversary with a six-week retrospective of more than 50 of our films.

Why is a distributor specializing in works made by women relevant in a "post-feminist" environment?
I don't think we are in a post-feminist environment. Frankly, I don't think there is such a thing as post-feminist. I think feminism is an on-going process and we all have a long way to go towards true equality in society. In terms of film and video, I am still waiting for the day that I can look in the newspaper for new film releases or even the catalogues from the major film festivals and see the same number of films being shown by men and women.

What distinguishes you from other distributors?
Besides the fact that we focus on media by and about women, which no one else in the U.S. does, we are committed to both the filmmakers we distribute and the audiences we distribute to. We have a political perspective as well as a commitment to aesthetics.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
We like happy filmmakers!

What would people be most surprised to learn about Women Make Movies?
That I (Debra Zimmerman) am not the founder of Women Make Movies! That and the fact that in the last five years we have returned almost $1,000,000 in royalties to film- and videomakers.

What types of works do you distribute?
All kinds. Everything from five-minute animated films to features, from video art to documentary and experimental work. However, in the last five years we have focused more on documentaries than on features.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
The early works of Sally Potter and Jane Campion. Films by Julie Dash, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Pratibha Parmar, Ulrike Ottinger, Helke Sander, Tracey Moffatt, Su Friedrich, and Ngozi Onwurah. Some better known titles: *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter* by Deborah Hoffmann; *Dialogues with Madwomen* and *Rachel's Daughters* by Allie Light and Irving Saraf; and *Calling the Ghosts* by Mandy Jacobson and Karmen Jelencic.

What drives you to acquire the titles you do?
It is always both an ideological and business decision; we want to distribute the very best films for which we


Clockwise, from top left: Elida Schogt's *Zyklon Portrait*, Deborah Hoffman's *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter*, Hannah Weyer's *La Boda*, Jane Campion's *A Girl's Own Story*.

think there is a need or a market. There are times when we pick up titles we know will not sell well but which move the art form forward. For documentaries, we look for quality and perspective. We are interested in films that give voice to women—whatever those voices are.

Is there such a thing as a "Women Make Movies" film?
Absolutely! It is a film that challenges audiences—either in form or content, or both—to think about film or the world in different ways than they are accustomed. It is a visually interesting film or tape that has a perspective or political content.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
We are very committed to working on semi-theatrical exhibition release before or at the same time as an educational release to audiences. We do this so that our films get as much exposure in the press and on the screen as possible. We also really like to work with filmmakers on this. When we release to the educational market, we try to do very targeted marketing with thematic mailings as well as a broad release in our catalogue.

Where do your titles generally show?
Just about everywhere! Cinemas, television, art galleries, universities, community centers, prisons, hospitals, high schools, churches. However, like most educational distributors, our major market is universities. Although Women's Studies departments are certainly a part of our market, they are by no means the major part.

How do educators and community members find out about the titles you handle?
We send out 30,000-40,000 catalogues annually in the fall and thematic mailings throughout the year. We also have had more than 100,000 hits on our website which contains our complete catalogue. Our films also show in major conferences and in media art centers around the country. A number of our new films each year show on HBO, *P.O.V.*, or the Sundance Channel.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We go to festivals like Toronto, Berlin, and the International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam, as well as women's film festivals. We talk to programmers and festival directors and our own filmmakers to get recommendations. We also pick up a number of films that have come through our Production Assistance program. Filmmakers should send us written descriptions and promotional material on their work. We will let them know if we want to see a tape. We will look at rough cuts.

Describe your relationship with the makers you represent:
Close and over a long period of time. We have developed relationships with filmmakers that have spanned 15 years. We represent up to 10 films by the same makers. In some cases, we have started with their very first film and now are representing their sixth or seventh.

Biggest change at WMM in recent years:
The Internet—isn't it for everyone? The Internet represents amazing possibilities for us and for our filmmakers. It is a fabulous way of reaching incredibly targeted audiences as well as the general public. We are also increasingly doing more and more home video because the Net is a great way to reach consumers.

Most important issues facing you today:
Technology; the coming change to DVD; the potential of streaming and online distribution.

Where will WMM be 10 years from now?
Hopefully, if we are able to renegotiate our lease, we'll be right where we are now—on Grand St. and Broadway in Soho! We got our space years ago when the market was way down. But beyond location, I hope that in 10 years we will finally be able to get our titles out to the world without having to put them in bubble-pack mailers. That's something I can hardly wait for. But I also think we will be doing the same thing: introducing audiences to the work of new and emerging talent as well as supporting and distributing the work of experimental and documentary makers who don't fit the Hollywood mold.

The biggest issue facing women's mediamaking and distribution is . . .
dealing with new technology—as it is for everyone. Specifically for women, though, there are other problems. Women still get smaller budgets than men and have trouble getting represented at major film festivals. There are not enough women in positions of decision-making at film festivals. For feature directors, particularly women of color, it is probably the problem of getting their second film made.

Other distributors you admire and why:
Zeitgeist Films, California Newsreel, Fanlight Films. I admire them all for doing what they do extremely well and with tremendous personal and professional integrity.

If you could give independent filmmakers only one bit of advice it would be . . .
to follow their vision but also think about distribution and market when in production. Take photos and think of music and picture clearances *before* the fine cut.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Our newest release is Hannah Weyer's beautiful documentary *La Boda*, which is a portrait of a young migrant farm worker on the eve of her wedding. Another filmmaker to keep an eye on is Elida Schogt, a young experimental filmmaker whose *Zyklon Portrait* has been winning awards at festivals around the world. She has a new film coming out this fall.

The future of independent media distribution in this country is one which . . .
truly represents the diversity of America.

Famous last words:
Take photos, take photos, take photos.

Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013; or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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THE FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

BY MICHELLE COE



NFJC cxecutive director Richard A. Siegel. Kim Bistrong, associate program director of grants and awards.

The Fund for Jewish Documentary Filmmaking, c/o National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 21 fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500; fax: 629-0508; www.jewishculture.org Contacts: Kim Bistrong, associate program director of grants and awards; Avi Y. Decter, film fund coordinator; Rebecca Metzger, communications associate.

What is the National Foundation for Jewish Culture?
The National Foundation for Jewish Culture (NFJC) is the central cultural agency of the American Jewish community. The NFJC works with artists, scholars, cultural institutions, and community agencies to enhance the quality of Jewish life in America. We just celebrated our fortieth anniversary in September.

When and why did the foundation come into being?
NFJC, which funds many projects beyond documentary film and video, was founded in 1960 by the Council of Jewish Federations to address the lack of attention to the arts in the organized Jewish community.

The driving philosophy behind NFJC is . . .
a commitment to fostering a dynamic Jewish identity in a multicultural society. Our programs and services promote Jewish creative renewal and the preservation of the Jewish cultural heritage.

What is the Fund for Jewish Documentary Filmmaking's relation to the NFJC? When and why was the fund established?
The Fund for Jewish Documentary Filmmaking is an NFJC initiative, established in 1996 with seed money from the Righteous Persons Foundation. The fund is designed to support the making of original documentary films and videos by American documentarians that promote thoughtful consideration of Jewish history, culture, identity, and contemporary issues among diverse public audiences.

The driving philosophy behind the fund is . . .
film and video have the power to re-shape our thinking, sense of community, and understanding of others and ourselves. The fund supports works that address significant subjects, offer fresh, challenging perspectives, engage audiences across cultural lines, and influence the way various publics understand and interpret Jewish experience and concerns.

What types of documentaries does the fund seek?
Preference is given to documentary films and videos that address significant issues relating to the American Jewish experience. Representative issues and themes have included: American Jewish memory and identity, past and present; emergent forms of Jewish creativity and culture; historical cultures and ethnic backgrounds of American Jewry; changing patterns of Jewish civilization in America; European Jewry, the Holocaust, and American responses; Israel-America relations and cultural interchange.

Name some of the best known titles and/or artists you have funded. What have been some of the paths of those projects?
Our most successful recent film was Aviva Kempner's *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg,* which we awarded a $40,000 grant in 1996 and which has, since its debut at the Hamptons Film Festival in 1998, been featured in the *New York Times* and on NPR, and played all over the country and abroad—at the Berlin Jewish Film Festival, Jerusalem Film Festival, and for an extended run at the Film Forum in New York City, to mention a few. [*Ed.:* And taking over $2 million at the box office by early fall.]

Other successes include (screenings and awards not complete): Menachem Daum & Oren Rudavsky's *A Life Apart: Hasidism in America*: PBS broadcast; Joseph Dorman's *Arguing the World*: PBS, Film Forum, Peabody Award; Judith Helfand's *A Healthy Baby Girl*: Margaret Mead Film Festival, Sundance, *P.O.V.*; Alan Snitow & Deborah Kaufman's *Blacks & Jews*: Sundance Film Festival, Human Rights Watch Film Festival, PBS, UK, Vienna; Elizabeth Rodgers and Robby Henson's *Exodus, 1947*: PBS; and Alisa Lebow & Cynthia Madansky's *Treyf*: Sundance Channel, the Jerusalem Film Festival, Chicago Film Festival, and the New York Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.



Clockwise, from left: Deborah Kaufman & Alan Snitow's *Blacks and Jews*; Menachem Daum & Oren Rudavsky's *A Life Apart: Hasidim in America*; Marlaine Glicksman's *The Commandment Keepers*.

How has the funding climate for independent media changed since the fund's inception?
In conjunction with the various regional Jewish film festivals, our national fund has stimulated a new attention to and appreciation for documentary film and video within the organized Jewish community. As a result, individual philanthropists and foundations who were not previously involved in funding documentaries are now showing a new level of interest.

What percentage of the fund's overall budget goes towards individual film or video projects?
No less than 85% goes directly to the support of documentary film and video. A fundraising campaign is now underway to complete a $4 million endowment in response to a challenge grant from the Righteous Persons Foundation. $2,225,000 has been raised to date.

How many media awards are given out per year?
The fund awards four to six grants each year.

What is the total dollar amount awarded annually?
Total funding each year depends on the money available to us, but usually averages around $150,000.

What is the average size of a grant?
The fund gives up to $50,000 each in support of films and videos *or* no more than 50% of the total budget of the film. Typically, films are awarded between $25,000 and $50,000 each.

How many applications do you get on average per year?
We receive approximately 85 applications a year, and the number is steadily growing. Around 12 of these films usually make it to a final cut, at which point there is a second screening and review process, and four to six projects are chosen for financial support.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications?
The only stipulations regarding the applicant are that they be an American citizen. They need not be Jewish, and they cannot be first-time filmmakers. We require that applicants submit a previous work as part of the application procedure.

Do you fund projects at various stages of production? Can individuals come back to the fund these various stages?
At the moment, we only offer completion funds. We require that an applicant submit a 10- to 12-minute review sample of the work-in-progress. Sometimes we send applications back to filmmakers with a note encouraging them to re-apply the following year.

As the fund develops, the NFJC intends to provide grant recipients with opportunities for dialogue with artists, intellectuals, and cultural leaders; for assistance in marketing, promotion, and distribution; and for support in seeking matching funds.

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Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
We offer one round of funding a year. Applications are sent out to our mailing list of 1,300 filmmakers in January and our deadline is in April. (For those interested, a copy of last year's application is available on our website: www.jewishculture.org.) The screening and decision-making process is very thorough, and we usually notify all of our applicants by the end of August as to whether they have received funding or not.

Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used? Can the same individual apply for funds two years in a row?
We like to see the project completed within the year. Applicants may not submit proposals for the same project more than two times.

Who are the program officers?
The two people in charge of this program are Kim Bistrong, Associate Program Director of Grants and Awards, and Avi Y. Decter, Film Fund Coordinator.

Who makes the awards decisions? Name a few of your past panelists.
There are a number of steps in the decision-making process. Each year, staff members and a panel of filmmakers review all of the applications submitted and recommend those films they feel merit further consideration to the fund's panel of artistic advisors. Scholars in many disciplines within the field of Jewish Studies also review the written portions of the applications.

The fund's panel, comprising filmmakers, critics, scholars, distributors, and film festival directors, meets to review those films chosen for the final round. Past panelists include Ken Turan, Annette Insdorf, Michael Renov, Larry Kardish, Aviva Kempner, Arnold Schwartzman, Stuart Klawans, Alan Berliner, Greg Laemmle, William Nichols, Ellen Schneider, and Sharon Pucker Rivo.

Talk about the review process.
When looking at sample films and videos, we look first and foremost for the significance of the work to Jewish cultural identity, specifically American Jewish identity, and for the intellectual and artistic approach to the subject. We evaluate films also according to their potential to reach out to other audiences (non-Jewish) and their potential for television programming and film festival screenings. We evaluate the production quality of the work submitted—camera work, creative and intelligent use of archival footage—and mostly, we look at strong subjects (interviewees that are interesting to listen to and an image track that is interesting to look at). We look for originality in the subject matter and in the approach to the subject.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
A strong application requires that the written portion be given as much attention and importance as the visual. We look for intellectual coherency and scholarship. We are always happy to see that, especially when dealing with specific historic subject matter, consultants and advisors are used. Also, we advise against a presentation of 10 minutes worth of one interview. We want to see production expertise in these 10 minutes, i.e., stylistic approaches, counter arguments, etc.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
We often receive incomplete applications. Applicants who want to be considered seriously need to submit complete applications *with* budget information.

Another common mistake is for filmmakers to submit tapes that are not cued to the 10 minutes they want reviewed. Don't assume that the whole tape will be watched. There have been occasions when the screeners have looked at something and, believing that it did not have a strong Jewish component, have ruled it out, only to discover later that the film was actually very compelling.

What would people most be surprised to learn about the fund and/or its founders?
That the NFJC is the only Jewish agency dedicated solely to the support of the arts and that the Fund for Jewish Documentary Filmmaking is the only Jewish film fund out there. Also, that we don't require our filmmakers to be Jewish.

In addition, I think filmmakers are surprised at our attention towards the content of the films submitted. There are films submitted to us that are stylistically unsophisticated, but the subject matter is so compelling and so important for enhancing our understanding of ourselves and history that we fund them. We always invite new approaches to documentary films and videos.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.
The Righteous Persons Foundation, the Nathan I. Cummings Foundation, Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, the Dorot Foundation, Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, the Abraham Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, the Jeremiah Kaplan Family Foundation, and the Jerome Foundation.

Famous last words:
The NFJC is proud to be serving as the chief catalyst for independent filmmakers who are interested in documenting the American Jewish experience.

Funder FAQ profiles a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF.

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BETA SP & DVCAM videographer with both cameras, lights, monitors, mics & wireless. Very portable, lightweight & I'm fast. Experience incl. documentaries, industrials, fundraisers & fashion. Please call John Kelleran (212) 334-3851.

BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography w/ many feature & short film credits. Owns 35 Arri BL3, Super 16/16 Aaton, HMIs, tungsten & dolly w/ tracks. Awards at Sundance & Raindance. Call for quotes & reel at (212) 226-8417; www.dp-brendanflynt.com

BROADCAST ENGINEER, 15 yrs. exp. Has Betacam SP location package. 3-chip mini DV. Looking to work on projects. Michael (212) 691-1311.

CAMERAMAN/STEADICAM OPERATOR: 16SR, Beta SP, Stereo TC Nagra4, TC FostexPD-4 DAT, feature lite pkg. to shoot features, music videos, commercials, etc. Call Mik Cribben for info & reel, (212) 929-7728 or (800) 592-3350.

CAMERAPERSON: Visual storyteller loves to collaborate, explore diverse styles & formats. Brings passion & productivity to your shoot. Award-winner w/ latest Super/Std. 16 Aaton XTR Prod. package. Todd (718) 222-9277; wacass@concentric.net

CHICAGO CONNECTION: Producer-editor for Midwest leg of your project. Producing awards: Sundance, duPont-Columbia, Leipzeig, etc. Editing for Frontline, NOVA, other PBS. Avid editing at rates New Yorkers can only dream of. (773) 761-8855.

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ Arri SR Super 16 package & 35IIC, w/ over 15 years in the industry. Credits incl. 2nd unit, FX & experimental. Looking for interesting projects. Will travel. Theo (212) 774-4157; pager: (213) 707-6195.

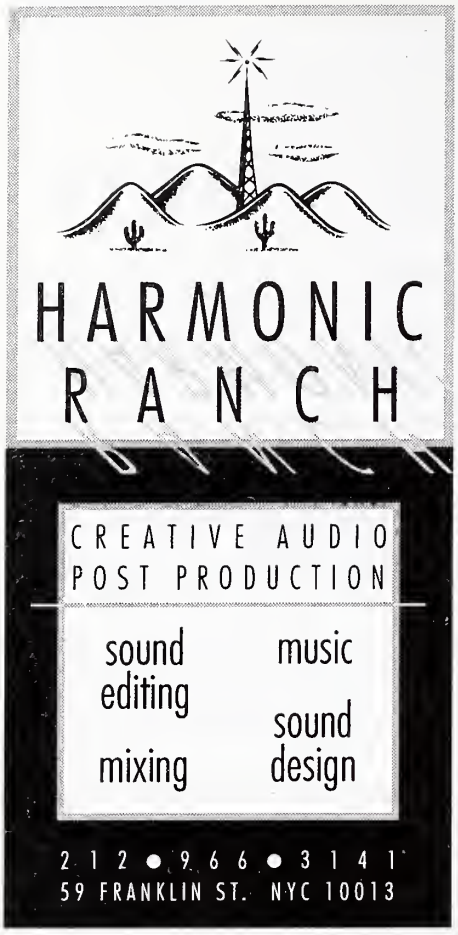
CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ reg/S-16mm Aaton, video-tap, lighting gear & more. Digital video too. Collaborations in features, shorts, docs, music videos & other compelling visions. Kevin Skvorak, reel & rates (718) 782-9179; kevskvk@inx.net

COMPOSER; Award-winning, experienced, will creatively score your film/TV/video project in any musical style. Extensive credits include nationally released features, TV dramas, documentaries, animation, on Networks, MTV, Disney, PBS. Columbia MA in composition; full digital studio; affordable. Demo reel available. Elliot Sokolov (212) 721-3218; or email Elliotsoko@aol.com

COMPOSER: Experienced, award-winning Yale conservatory grad writes affordable music in any style that will enhance your project. Save money without compromising creativity. Full service digital recording studio. FREE demo CD/initial consultation/rough sketch. Call Joseph Rubenstein; (212) 242-2691; joe56@earthlink.net

COMPOSER: Original music for your film or video project. Will work with any budget. Complete digital studio. NYC area. Demo CD upon request. Call Ian O'Brien: (201) 432-4705; iobrien@bellatlantic.net

COMPOSER Miriam Cutler loves to collaborate with filmmakers-features, docs. Sundance: *Licensed To Kill, Death A Love Story*; Peabody: *The Castro; POV: Double Life of Ernesto Gomez* & more (323) 664-1807; mircut@pacificnet.net





COMPOSER: Perfect music for your project. Orchestral to techno—you name it! Credits incl. NFL, PBS, Sundance, Absolut. Bach. of Music, Eastman School. Quentin Chiappetta (718) 752-9194; (917) 721-0058; qchiap@el.net

CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ lighting director background. Specialty films my specialty. Can give your film that unique "look." 16mm & 35mm packages avail. Call Charles for reel. (212) 295-7878.

DIGITAL VIDEO—Sony VX100 digital camera & cameraman, Sennheiser ME 66 shotgun mic, pro accessories. Experienced in dance, theater & performance art documentation. $150 plus tapes for documentations. Larger projects negotiable. Final Cut Pro digital editing with editor. John Newell (212) 677-6652; johnewell@earthlink.net

DIGITAL VIDEO Videographer/DP, with Canon XL-1 videocam; prefer documentaries, shorts and less traditional projects; documentation for dance, music and performance. Alan Roth (718) 218-8065; alanroth@mail.com

DIGITAL VIDEOGRAPHER with Sony VX-1000 and Lectrosonic radio mic. available and happy to shoot documentaries and shorts. Contact Melissa (212) 352-4141; mqh8695@is.nyu.edu

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Award-winning, exp, looking for interesting projects. Credits incl. features, docs & commercials in the U.S., Europe & Israel. Own complete Aaton Super 16 pkg & lights. Call Adam for reel. (212) 932-8255 or (917) 504-7244; nyvardy@worldnet.att.net

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for creative projects to lens; features, commercials, shorts, music videos & documentaries. 35 and 16mm packages avail. New York/Boston based, will travel. Call for reel: (781) 545-2609; bkarol@mediaone.net

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for interesting features, shorts, ind. projects, etc. Credits incl. features, commercials, industrials, short films, music videos. Aaton 16/S-16 pkg avail. Abe (718) 263-0010.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Owner 16mm Aaton, plus 35mm non-sync & hand-crank cameras. Experimental background; creative look. Shooting credits incl. features, shorts, promos, commercials & music videos. New York-based, will travel. Carolyn (718) 930-7969.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ Arri 16 & 35BL2 camera pkgs. Credits incl. many indie features & shorts. Create "big film" look on low budget. Flexible rates & I work quickly. Willing to travel. Matthew: (617) 244-6730; (845) 439-5459; mwdp@rcn.com

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ complete 16mm camera, wants to shoot your project. Resumé & reel available upon request. Call Mai Iskander (718) 623-8555; iskander@rcn.com

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY with Arri BL 3, Aaton XTR Prod S16/16mm, and Canon XL1 camera package is ready to shoot your project. Call Jay Silver at (718) 383-1325 for a copy of reel. email: hihosliver@earthlink.com

DOCUMENTARY VIDEOGRAPHER with extensive international experience (Latin America, Africa, Europe & Canada). 22 years of experience as director/producer, videographer and editor of independent documentaries broadcast on CNN International, PBS, Cinemax & CBC. Last doc premiered at Sundance Festival. Specializes in cinema verité, social issue & multicultural projects. Robbie Leppzer, Turning Tide Productions; (800) 557-6414; leppzer@turningtide.com; www.turningtide.com.

DP WITH CAMERA: Client list, package details (cameras and editing), view clips/stills. To order reel or contact, visit: www.kozma.com

DV CONSULTANT: Need help w/ Final Cut Pro? Exp. consultant avail. for training in FCP, AfterEffects, Media Cleaner Pro, or just Mac basics. Former Apple tech rep. & working filmmaker in NYC. Discount for AIVF members. Greg (347) 731-3466.

EDITOR AVAILABLE: Experienced award-winning Avid editor available to work on interesting and innovative pieces. Will work dirt cheap for the chance to be challenged (docs, shorts, features). Call Kevin (212) 591-0589.

EDITOR WITH AVID, Beta SP, DVCam, miniDV, DAT, 3/4", AfterEffects, Commotion, etc. Experienced with features, documentaries, broadcast, industrials & short form material; commercial to avant garde. Convenient East Village location with windows! $350/day, $50/hr. (212) 228-1914; www.detournyc.com

EDITOR WITH AVID: Conscientious advocate of the Invisible Cut. Comfy West Village space. AVR77, 216 gigs, Beta, VHS, DV. MC/Visa. Bill G. (212) 243-1343; gcomvid@usa.net

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

EXPERIENCED CAMERAMAN w/ Arri SR II 16mm and Betacam SP packages. Extensive experience in features and documentaries. Edgar Gil (718) 832-1846; maesegil@earthlink.net

EXPERIENCED CINEMATOGRAPHER with crew & equipment; 16mm & 35mm. Short films & features. Vincent (212) 779-1441.

GRANTWRITING/FUNDRAISING: research, writing & strategy (for production, distribution, exhibition, & educational projects of media). Successful proposals to NYSCA, NEA, NEH, ITVS, Soros Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Lila Acheson Wallace Foundation. Fast writers, reasonable rates. Wanda Bershen, (212) 598-0224; www.reddiaper.com; or Geri Thomas (212) 625-2011; www.artstaffing.com

JOHN BASKO: Documentary cameraman w/ extensive international Network experience. Civil wars in Kosovo, Beirut, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Tiananmen Square student uprising. Equipment maintained by Sony. (718) 278-7869; fax: 278-6830; Johnbasko@aol.com

LOCATION SOUND: Over 20 yrs sound exp. w/ timecode Nagra & DAT, quality mics. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. Harvey & Fred Edwards, (518) 677-5720; edfilms@worldnet.att.net

MIDWEST-BASED CINEMATOGRAPHER with lots of experience shooting docs & indie projects (film/video). Owner: Canon XL-1 digital camera. Great at hand-held, cinema verité-style shooting. Indie-friendly rates. Call Ines (773) 761-9425; Ines@PanaceaPictures.com

PRODUCTION TEAM: Providing services ranging from budget preparation to postproduction supervision. Help for your fea-

ture, short, video or commercial. Reduced rates for low-budget projects. A.L. Films: (718) 852-6194; legitfilms@hotmail.com

WEB DESIGNER creates your homepage. Reasonable rates. Also web maintenance. (212) 226-1526; rip@csi.com; http://rip.homepage.com

Opportunities • Gigs

ANTICIPATED ASSISTANT TENURE-TRACK PROFESSOR IN FILM PRODUCTION to begin Aug. 1, 2001. MFA or PhD req. Successful candidates will have demonstrated capability of teaching digital postproduction & visual effects for film, an active research &/or creative projects program & a willingness to perform service responsibilities. Candidates should also have experience in one of the following areas: film production, multimedia production, or an area in media studies. Application procedures: by Dec. 1, 2000, send appl. Letter, vita, transcripts, evidence of teaching effectiveness, sample publications & three letters of recommendation to: Chair, Film Production Search Committee, Comm. Dept., Georgia State Univ., Univ. Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303. GA State Univ is an equal opportunity education institution & is an EEO/AA employer.

ASST/ASSOC PROFESSOR, EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION: Must have full range of 16mm production skills & proficiency in techniques of the animation arts. Expertise in optical printing &/or computer-based digital video is desirable. MFA or equivalent professional experience is req. Send curriculum vitae, statement of teaching philosophy, VHS tape of personal work in animation & 3 references to: Diane Kitchen, Search Committee, Film Department, Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. AA/EOE. Screening of applications will continue until the position is filled.

WELL-ESTABLISHED freelance camera group in NYC seeking professional cameramen and soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

Preproducion • Development

BUDGETS/INVESTOR PACKAGE: Experienced Line Producer will prepare script breakdowns, shooting schedules & detailed budgets. Movie Magic equipped. MC, Visa, Amex. Indie rates negotiable. Mark (212) 340-1243.

PRODUCER WANTED: Award-winning writer/director has terrific script, unusual character-driven story perfect for a Vanessa Redgrave or Judi Dench. Takes place mostly during 1995 in rural area (could be overseas). Alden: (312) 455-8035.

PRODUCTION OFFICE: West 85th in NYC, fully wired all office equip, Beta, 3/4" dubbing, animation. Avid room as needed. Short or long-term. Dana (212) 501-7878 x. 222.

SCRIPTS WANTED; Producer with complete Sony High Definition 24P facility seeks profitable projects to produce or co-produce. Feature films, episodic television or documentaries. Contact Derek at (212) 868-0028 for details; www.allinone-usa.com

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16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound-transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable rates. (212) 925-1500.

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AVID MEDIA COMPOSER SUITE: On-line/off-line, AVR 77, Beta SP, 3D RealTime graphics, Intraframe, 888 Digidesign audio interface, Digitizing video slave driver, professional recording studio monitors, two 20" viewing monitors, SMPTE viewing monitors, DAT recorder, 16 channel mixer, ProTools, After Effects, Photoshop, Illustrator. 350 MHz/128 MB G3. Creative, skilled staff editors or use your own. Spacious, charming environment. 24 hr access. Best rates in NYC. Ph/fax: (718) 802-9874 or (917) 783-5128.

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MEDIA 100 EDITING Broadcast quality, newest software. Huge storage & RAM. Betacam, 3/4", all DV formats, S-VHS, Hi-8 . . . Great location, friendly environment & low rates, tech support, talented editors & fx artists available: (212) 868-0028.

PRODUCER WITH PRODUCTION OFFICE looking for low budget features to produce in New York. Will provide budgeting/scheduling, production personnel. Video, shorts, and feature experience. Call Val at (212) 295-7878 or zelda212@netscape.net

PRODUCTION TRANSCRIPTS: Verbatim transcripts for documentaries, journalists, etc. Low prices & flat rates based on tape length. A standard 1 hr., 1-on-1 interview is only $70; www.productiontranscripts.com for details or call: (323) 668-0611.

PROFESSIONAL VIDEO COMPRESSION for presenting work over the Internet. Years of experience & clients incl. film festivals & independent filmmakers. Discount for AIVF members. Contact: compression@randomroom.com; www.randomroom.com/compression

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BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (NOV. 1 FOR JAN/FEB ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: SCOTT@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ASPEN SHORTSFEST, April 10-14, CO. Deadline: Nov. 17 (early); Jan. 5 (final). Fest is a premiere int'l competitive showcase for short films (30 min. & less). Fest seeks entries of originality, integrity & technical excellence. Student & int'l entries also welcome. Cats: comedy, short, animation, children, doc, drama, student. Awards: cash prizes totaling $20,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 70mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (early); $45 (final). Contact: AS, Brad White, 110 East Hallam, Ste. 102, Aspen, CO 81611; (970) 925-6882; fax: 925-1967; shortsfest@aspenfilm.org; www.aspenfilm.com

CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 15-25, OH. Deadlines: Oct. 31 (early); Nov. 30 (final). Fest is Ohio's premiere film event, presenting approx. 80 new features from around world in various cats & more than 100 shorts presented in collected programs. Film forums follow selected films, giving audiences opportunity to discuss films w/ filmmakers, critics & other guest panelists. The Midwest Independent Filmmakers Conference is held during last weekend of fest. Unique programs include Cultural Journeys and FilmSlam (high school student fest). Submissions must have been completed after Jan 1, 1999 & not previously submitted. Works-in-progress not eligible. Cats: narrative, doc, animation, experimental. Awards: Cash awards of $500. Formats: 35mm,16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25/$35 (short, 45 min. or less); $50/$60 (feature, over 45 min.). Contact: CIFF, Angie Stetzy, Entry Coordinator, 2510 Market Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 623-3456; fax: (216) 623-0103; cfs@clevelandfilm.org; www.clevelandfilm.org

CUCALORUS FILM FESTIVAL, March 22-25, NC. Deadlines: Nov. 15 (early); Dec. 15 (final).7th annual fest presented by the Cucalorus Film Foundation in historic downtown Wilmington. All formats, genres & lengths accepted. This year marks the first year fest will be competitive. Filmmakers compete for a grant of goods & services for an upcoming project. No restriction on film's year of completion. Formats: All. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $20 (early); $30 (final). Contact: CFF, PO Box 2763, Wilmington, NC 28402; 420 Orange St., Wilmington, NC 28401; (910) 343-5995; fax 343-5227; info@cucalorus.org; www.cucalorus.org

DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 14-18, TX. Deadline: Nov. 20. 14th annual fest is one of the largest & most diversified video events in the U.S., providing a showcase for new works by nat'l, int'l & regional independent video artists. Over 250 screenings, plus installations, computer-based applications, exhibits, panel discussions & workshops for adults & children are presented simultaneously in multiple areas. No thematic or content restrictions. Fest also accepts multimedia entries for the interActive Zone (CD-ROM, CD-I, 3DO, hypertext, etc) & short digital videos to runs on its web site. Cats: Any style or genre, experimental, doc, animation, music video, feature, multimedia. Awards: $1,200 awarded in memory of video artist & teacher Barbra Aronofsky Latham. Rental fees paid to participants. Formats: Beta SP preferred, will accept 3/4", 1/2", CD-ROM, digital video, S-VHS, 8mm, Hi-8, Web for extra $5. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (members of the Video Assoc. of Dallas); $30 (non-members). Contact: DVF, Bart Weiss, Fest Dir., 1405 Woodlawn Ave., Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 999-8999; fax: 999-8998; info@videofest.org; www.videofest.org

FLICKAPALOOZA, June 10-14, CA. Deadlines: Nov. 15 (early); April 1 (final). Fest caters to both filmmakers & industry executives by creating an arena to view, buy or sell films of all genres, in an entertaining atmosphere conductive to promoting filmmaking careers. Films must have been completeed after June 1, 1999. Rough cuts are accepted if film will be completed by June 2001. All film screened must be premieres without distribution in place. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fees: $40/$55 (feature); $30/$45 (short, 30 min. or less). Contact: Flickapalooza, 7775 Sunset Blvd., PMB #200, Hollywood, CA 90046; flickapalooza@aol.com; www.flickapalooza.com

HAZEL WOLF ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL (formerly Equinox), April 5-8, WA Deadline: Dec. 1 Fest presents the best in Environmental Films from around the world & an Environmental Media Workshop Series. Seeking works in all genres, addressing environmental issues. Special consideration to works associated with environmental campaigns. Max length 60 min. Incl. short written description of the film & sample of promotional material &/or materials from campaign. Formats: VHS (w/your name and contact info written on the tape; s.a.s.e. optional). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (checks payable to: Moving Images VP); Contact: HWEFF, c/o KCTS, 401 Mercer St., Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 443-7239; fax 443-6691; info@hazelfilm.org; www.hazelfilm.org

HI MOM! FILM FESTIVAL, March 2-4, NC. Deadline: Dec. 15 (early); Jan. 10 (final). Fest is accepting short shorts and not-so-short shorts with deep thoughts and shallow pockets. Three days of music, movies, and yes again: pancakes in the shape of your initials. Awards: Cash and non-cash prizes awarded. Formats: all formats accepted. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC). Entry fees: none (early); $10 (final). Contact: 401 Pritchard Ave., Chapel Hill, NC. 27516; himomfilmfest@yahoo.com; www.metalab.unc.edu/cpg

IFFCON, Jan. 13-15, CA. Deadline: Oct. 13. Int'l Film Financing Conference links independent producers with int'l financiers, buyers & co-producers. Limited to 60 producers chosen through a selection process, the conference incl. roundtables, private meetings & receptions. Open Day, Jan. 14, is the only day attendance is open to the public. The fee is $150. Producers with Projects applicants should mail to: IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., 2nd fl.,. SF, CA 94107. Contact: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Box Office, 701 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 978-2787 or (415) 281-9777; fax: 978-5210; info@iffcon.com; www.iffcon.com

KANSAS CITY FILMMAKERS JUBILEE, April 4-8, KS. Deadlines: Dec. 1 (early); Jan. 1 (final). 5th annual event open to domestic & int'l short films 30 min. or less. Cats: narrative, experimental, animation & doc. Awards: Top film in each genre will win at least $1,000 of cash or prizes. Fest awarded over $45,000 in cash and prizes in the last three years. Formats: all formats accepted. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (early); $25 (final). Contact: KCFJ, 4826 W. 77th Terrace, Prairie Village, KS 66208; (913) 649-0244; kcjub@kcjubilee.org; www.kcjubilee.org

LESBIAN LOOKS, Feb., AZ. Deadline: Nov. 15. Fest seeks narrative, doc, exp. & mixed-genre work of all lengths. Fee paid for all works screened. Incl. synopsis, brief artist bio & B/W still(s) w/ entry. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: LL, Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, Univ. of AZ, Tucson, AZ 85721, bseckinger@u.arizona.edu; www.arizona.edu/~lgbcom/

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 2-11, NY. Deadline: Nov. 1. Non-competitive fest screens 50 new works, shorts & features, screen to an est. audience of 12,000 children ages 3-18, parents, filmmakers & media execs. Plus workshops, panels, sidebar events & presentations. Accepting passionate, creative work that doesn't speak down to children: shorts, docs, animation & more. Foreign language films must be subtitled in English. Formats: Beta SP (PAL or NTSC), 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM). Entry fees: $75 (feature, 45 min. or longer); $50 (short, under 45 min.); $25 (student). Contact: NYICFF, Emily Shapiro, 295 Greenwich Street #426 New York, NY 10007; (212) 528-0500; fax: 528-8317; info@gkids.com; www.gkids.com



A LAND OF AWES IN KANSAS

When the Kansas City Filmmaker's Jubilee began, it was meant to stir up interest and support for local independent filmmakers. Now in its fifth year, the event has grow considerably and is striking a balance between staying true to its indie beginnings while expanding and bringing in more fest-tested fare in hopes of attracting general moviegoers. Jubilee president Fred Andrews says, "The Jubilee is really more than a festival. It's a celebration of filmmaking." A shorts-only event, the Jubilee includes numerous sidebars like the "Up-Against-the-Wall" section, which shows locally made shorts at area art galleries. Seminars on aspects of the filmmaking process, like cinematograpy, writing, and casting workshops, are offered as well. See Listing.

the 4th annual
the Double Take documentary film festival
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call for entries
deadline: december 28
late deadline: january 8
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919.660.3699
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www.ddff.org
in association with the center for documentary studies at duke university

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NO DANCE FILM AND MULTIMEDIA FESTIVAL, Jan 20-26, UT. Deadline: Nov. 18 (early), Dec. 16 (final). Cats: doc (no less than 30 min.), feature (no less than 70 min.), short, music video (no more than 10 min.), screenplays (must be feature length). Formats: DVD, 1/2", Internet streaming, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25/$50 (film/vid); $50/$70 (screenplay). For a complete list of rules, check web site (6161.com) or send s.a.s.e. to address below. Contact: No Dance, 703 Pier Ave. #675, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254; (310) 937-6363; www.6161.com

PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 9-25, OR. Deadline: Oct. 31. Noncompetitive fest focuses primarily on new work from outside the U.S., but American features, docs & shorts included. Fest attracts audiences of over 30,000 and screens nearly 100 films from over 30 countries. Awards: Best of Fest, Audience Award (for both feature film & short), and Best New Director Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: PIFF, Bill Foster, NW Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; info@nwfilm.org; www.nwfilm.org

PORTLAND JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 16-Feb. 6, OR. Deadline: Nov. 15. Fest seeks dramatic featres, docs, shorts & experimental works that touch on Jewish themes and culture. Formats: VHS, Beta SP, 16mm, 35mm. Include press materials and stil with entries. No entry fee. Contact: PJFF, Institute for Judaic Studies, 2900 SW Peaceful Lane, Portland, OR 97201; (503) 282-1175; howard@aracnet.com

CLEVELAND ROCKS!

Poised to celebrate its Silver Anniversary, the Cleveland Film Festival has grown in leaps and bounds since its inception 25 years ago. In its first year, the festival was presented weekly as a subscription series and featured eight films from seven countries. Last year's fest ival showcased 75 features and 98 shorts from 36 countries, with attendance records topping 36,000 Midwestern cinephiles. Organized by the Cleveland Film Society, which holds year-round programs and services for its 1,500 members, the festival brings a wealth of cinema culture to Ohio. The success of the stalwart festival continues to rise and should continue to blossom with their anniversary festivities next year. See listing.



SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 1-11, CA. Deadline: Dec. 15. 16th annual fest is committed to diverse programming & highlighting independent films that define & explore the human condition. Fest comprises over 125 films, seminars, workshops, tributes, retros, galas & special events. Attended by industry professionals, press, celebrity guests & over 40,000 film fans. Fest is competitive w/ jury of industry professionals who select winners in 9 categories. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Digibeta. Preview on VHS (preferred) & PAL. Entry fees: $40 (U.S.); $45 (int'l). Contact: SBIFF, Chris Gilmer-Linz, features programmer or Nubia Flores, shorts/docs programmer, 1216 State St., Ste 710, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; (805) 963-0023; fax: 962-2524; info@sbfilmfestival.org; www.sbfilmfestival.org

SILVER IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL, April 26-May 12, IL. Deadline: Nov. 1. 7th annual fest screens selected films & videos that honor & celebrate the lives of older adults and address issues of aging. Fest is a project of Terra Nova Films Inc., a Chicago-based, nonprofit organization that produces and distributes films & videos that promote positive images of older adults. Cats: narrative, doc, animation & experimental. Awards: (non-cash) given to best feature, doc. & short (any genre). All entries must have English language audio track or subtitles. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35; $25 (student). Contact: CSIFF, Sheila Malkind, Director, 9848 South Winchester Ave., Chicago, IL 60643; (773) 881-6940; fax: 881-3368; siff@terranova.org; www.terranova.org/festival/FestivalFset.htm

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM FESTIVAL (SXSW), March 9-17. TX. Deadline: Nov. 15 (early); Dec. 8 (final). U.S. & int'l independent film & video festival & conference showcases over 200 shorts & features for audiences estimated at 30,000 over 9 days. Entries must be completed in 2000 or early 2001 & must not have previously screened in Austin, TX to be eligible for consideration. Film Conference kicks off the event, featuring 4 days of panel discussions geared toward working film & videomakers, as well as screenwriters, aspiring professionals and aficionados. 3-day trade show incl. equipment & service providers, digital editing suite, and the latest in film & video technology. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, animation, short, music video. Awards: Narr. Feature, Narr. Short, Doc. Feature, Doc. Short, Anim. Short, Exp. Short, Music Video, Audience Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, BetaSP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20/$25 (shorts); $30/$35 (features). Contact: SBSWFF, Angela Lee, Sr. Programmer, Box 4999, Austin, TX 78765; (512) 467-7979; fax: 467-0737; film@sxsw.com; www.sxsw.com

TAMBAY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 8-11, FL. Deadline: Dec. 3. Fests now accepting submissions for features, shorts, docs, animation and student projects.. Awards: cash & non-cash prizes in Best New Director,

Reel Humanitarian Award, Best of Show & Jury Award categories. Entry fees: $30 (35mm); $25 (16mm/all video formats); $20 (student). Preview on VHS. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, S-VHS, Beta. For appl. info contact: TFVF, 16002 Saddle Creek Dr., Tampa FL, 33618; (813) 964-9781; Tambayfilm@yahoo.com

THESSALONIKI USA FILM FESTIVAL, late April-early May, NY. Deadline: Oct. 16 (early); Nov. 1 (final). 5th annual non-competitive fest showcases outstanding new cinema of Greece & the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Yugoslavia) and their diasporas; e.g., work by emigres, filmmakers of Greek/Balkan heritage, etc. Features & shorts of all lengths and genres are eligible, with preference given to U.S. or NY premieres; entries by Greek-American & Balkan-American filmmakers are especially welcome. To submit, send preview tape w/ complete publicity kit. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fees: $20 (early); $30 (final). Entry form required. Contact: TUSAFF, Fest Coordinator, 200 East 10th St., Ste. 519, New York, NY 10003. (212) 358-3950; kefipix@aol.com; www.thessaloniki-usa.org

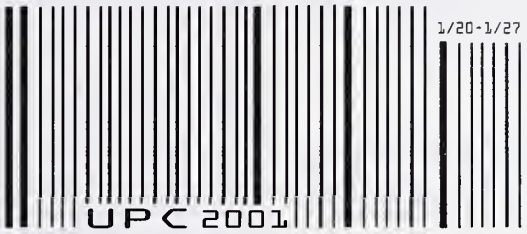
U.S. COMEDY ARTS FESTIVAL, Feb. 9-13, CO. Deadline: Dec. 1. The goal of the USCAF Film Program is to create a venue for comedic film talent to showcase their material to an industry heavy audience. Films will be selected by Film Program staff in conjunction with the exec directors and producers of fest. Entries must not open theatrically or be broadcast nationally in U.S. prior to March, 2001. Cats: feature, short (under 60 min.). Awards: Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: USCAF, Attn: Film Program, 2049 Century Park E., Ste. 4200, L.A., CA 90067; (310) 201-9595; fax: (310) 201-9445; filmdiscovery@hbo.com; www.uscaf.com

Foreign

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 12-24, Germany. Deadlines: Nov 15 (entry forms); Nov. 25 (VHS cassettes). Now in 51st edition, this is one of world's top fests, w/ 9,000 guests attending fest & European Film Market. Fest offers participating filmmakers hospitable environment. Fest divided into 7 sections, each w/ own character & organization. Int'l Competition: newly released & unreleased 70mm & 35mm features programmed by invitation of fest director. 2 sections known for strong programming of U.S. indie films are: Int'l Forum of New Cinema & Panorama (noncompetitive section of official program). Both screen narrative, doc & experimental works. Forum specializes in avant-garde intellectual & political films (60 min. & up, 16mm & 35mm) & also shows more commercial films. Panorama presents wide range of work from low-budget to more commercial ventures, incl. studio films (features & shorts under 15 min., 70mm, 35mm, 16mm). The main criterion for Panorama is the film's second life in Germany, either on TV or commercial distribution. Other sections: Kinderfilmfest; Retros; Lifetime Achievement tributes; New German Films. European Film Market is important meeting place for screenings & sales, w/ reps from over 40 countries. Forum has own theater, Arsenal, for year-round commercial exhibition occasionally of festival titles. Forum has its own two juries, with cash

call for entries

ad



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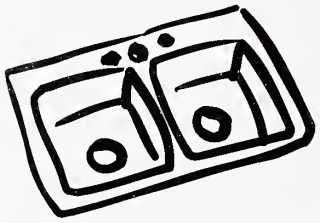
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Our 4th annual "Mag" welcomes all lengths, all genres. Cash awards, "Mags" given. Entries screened in 35mm, 16mm, Beta, VHS. No entry fee. Filmmakers who attend stay free. Congrats to last "Mag" winners: Mike Goscia's "Captive Audience", Marlene Rhein's "Let Me Tell You A Story", Bill Brown's "Confederation Park", Katherine Griffin's "The Innocents", and Dennis J. Courtney's "Araby".

For entry form write to:
Ron Tibbett, Festival Director
Magnolia Independent Film Festival
2269 Waverly Dr.
West Point, MS 39773
Phone (601) 494-5836
Fax (601) 494-9900
www.magfilmfest.com
Entry deadline Jan. 19, 2001

prizes. All entries must be produced in 12 mo. preceding fest & not released theatrically or on video in Germany. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. In 2001, Independent Feature Project will be supporting "American Independents at Berlin" program, incl: market booth, message center for U.S. filmmakers & companies, orientation for newcomers, and "Showcase of American Independent Films" at market. Cats: feature, short, doc, experimental, children, retros. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Notes: All films must have been completed during 2000. Shorts on 35mm must be under 10 min. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $50 (features); no entry fee (shorts). For info & entry forms, contact: Gordon Hitchens, Apt. 3W, 214 W. 85th St., NY, NY 10024; tel/fax: (212) 877-6856; or contact: BIFF, Int'l Competition, Moritz de Hadeln, director; Forum, Ulrich Gregor, director; Panorama, Wieland Speck, director, Potsdamer Strasse 5, Berlin, Germany 10785; tel: 011 49 30 25920-0; fax: 49 30 25920-499; forum@ forumifb.b.shuttle.de; 100024.327@compuserve.com; www.berlinale.de; www.fdk-berlin.de

BRUSSELS EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 18-28, Belgium. Deadline: Oct. 31. Founded in 1974, fest's main section is European Competition, in which features (longer than 60 min.) & shorts (less than 20 min.), shot in 35mm, compete for Golden & Silver Iris Awards (support for European promotion & distribution worth over 80,000 Euro). Other sections: America meets Europe (Independent features longer than 60 min.); Belgian Focus w/ a Nat'l Competition for short films & docs; Focus on New German Directors; Special programs incl. Night of the Short Film, tributes to film personalities, etc. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BEFF, Christian Thomas, Fest Dir., Chausse de Louvain 30, 1210 Brussels, Belgium; 011 32 2 227 39 80; fax: 32 2 218 18 60; infoffb@netcity.be; www.brusselsfilmfest.com

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CARTOONS & ANIMATED FILMS, Feb. 28-March 3, Belgium. Deadline: Nov. 1. Since 1982, fest has been showcase for new, interesting works in animation, providing opp. to be seen by Belgian film & TV distribs. While noncompetitive, it is one of top 8 European animation fests involved in nominating films that compete for Cartoon d'Or. Close to 34,000 spectators attend hundreds of film premieres, retros & exhibits. Computer animation (incl. Pixel Ina prize-winners from Imagina), children's programs & short ind. animation are some fest highlights. Cats: animation, long feature, CGI, short, children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BIFCAF, Françoise Catahala, Folioscope a.s.b.l., Rue de la Rhetorique 19, 1060 Brussels, Belgium; 011 322 534 4125; fax: 322 534 2279; info@folioscope.be; www.awn.com/folioscope/festival

CINEMA DU REEL, March 9-18, France. Deadline: Nov. 1. Int'l fest of visual anthropology & social documentation, was set up in 1979 with an aim of promoting documentary cinema. Fest is held at the George Pompidou Centre in Paris & followed by Overview of Ethnographic Films, held at the Musée de l'Homme. Films & videos not released theatrically in France or aired on French TV & unawarded at other French int'l fests are eligible. Works w/ cinematographic qualities & emphasizing filmmaker's point of view likely for selection; informative docs or news reports not considered. Films must have been completed between Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 2000. Cats: ethnological, documentary. Awards decided by int'l jury, incl Grand Prix (50,000FF, approx. $6,800), short film prize (15,000FF), Joris Ivens Prize to young filmmaker (15,000FF, approx. $2,040) & Multimedia Author's Society (SCAM) Prize (30,000FF, approx. $4,080). Jury of librarians & professionals award the Libraries Prize (30,000FF for films w/ French version or French subtitles) w/in int'l competitive section or French Panorama & Foreign Affairs Ministry awards, Louis Marcorelles Prize. Formats: 35mm,16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Only send entry info for deadline, do not send tape until requested. Contact: CDR, BPI—Centre Georges Pompidou, 25, rue de Renard, Paris Cedex 04, France 75197; 011 33 1 44 78 44 21; fax: 011 33 1 44 78 12 24; cinereel@bpi.fr; www.bpi.fr

CRETEIL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, March 23-April 1, France. Deadline: Nov. 15. One of world's oldest fests of films by women & one of most important showcases, now celebrating 23rd yr. In Paris suburb of Créteil, fest annually attracts audiences of over 40,000, incl. filmmakers, journalists, distributors & buyers. Controversial & critical discussions traditionally part of proceedings. Sections: competition, retro of modern woman director, young cinema, int'l program. Special event for 2001: Major Heroines of the Last Century; Women & Taboos; Women's Vision & Science Fiction. Competitive section selects 10 narrative features, 10 feature docs & 30 shorts. All films shown 3 times. Awards: total of 10 prizes, some cash, some equipment & facilities, script development fund. U.S. preselection made by fest's U.S. reps B. Reynaud & E. Hesik. Films must be directed or co-directed by women; completed since Mar. 1, 1999; not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV or shown at other French fests. Student productions will NOT be considered. All subjects, genres & styles considered. Fest pays for filmmakers' accommodation (3 days) & round-trip shipping for films selected. Films need synopsis, publicity, bio material, and, if selected, transcript of dialogue. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fee: $15; payable to Elizabeth Hesik. For appl. Contact: B. Reynaud, Cal. Inst. Of the Arts, School of Film/Video, 24700 McBean Pkwy, Valencia, CA 91355; fax: (323) 667-0166 or 259-9897; ehesik@yahoo.com or breynaud@calarts.edu; www.gdebussac.fr/filmfem

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 31-April 15, China. Deadline: early Dec. Fest now in 24th yr. is a noncompetitive event organized by Provisional Urban Council of Hong Kong & aims to serve as platform for int'l film exchange & window to world for Hong Kong Cinema. Program incl. Int'l Cinema (70-80 new features); Asian Cinema (40-50 new features); Hong Kong Panorama (8-12 films) & Hong Kong Retrospective Cinema (30 films). Films must not have been shown in Hong Kong prior to fest screenings. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: HKIFF, Senior Manager, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Level 7, Administration Bldg., 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China; 011 852 2734 2903; fax: 852 2366 5206; hkiff@hkiff.org.hk; www.hkiff.org.hk

LONDON LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, March 29-April 12, UK. Deadline: Dec. 8. 15th annual int'l noncompetitive fest addressing lesbian & gay identity and experience. Submissions must not have been previously screened in UK & must have been produced in last 2 years. Cats include features, docs & shorts. Awards: Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: LLGFF, Carol Coombes, fest ass't, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, UK; 011 44 171 815 1322; fax: 44 171 633 0786; carol.coombes@bfi.org.uk; www.llgff.org.uk

NANTES FESTIVAL OF THREE CONTINENTS, Nov. 11-28, France. Deadline: Oct. 31. Founded in 1979, fest is a major European competitive forum/showcase for feature-length fiction films from Asia, Africa, Latin America & African America. features 70 films (12 in competition), offering awards Montgolfière d'Or (30,000 ff, approx. $4,080) & Montgolfière d'Argent. This was one of the original fests focusing on cinema of Third World. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: NFTC, Philippe Jalladeau & Alain Jalladeau, Directors, 19A Passage Pommeraye, B.P. 43302, 44003 Nantes Cedex 1, France; 011 33 2 40 69 74 14; fax: 33 2 40 73 55 22; f3c@franceplus.com

NATFILM FESTIVAL, March 30-April 15, Denmark. Deadline: Dec. 1. 11th annual fest is the biggest film event in Denmark showcasing 40 feature-length films as well as short films & video programs and is attended by 40,000 people. Again this year a number of foreign films secured theatrical release or TV-sale in Denmark as a direct result of succesful fest screenings. Note that only feature-length films are screened (minimum 65 min.). Cats incl indie, doc, experimental, commercials, music video, student. Awards: no prizes (except a nat'l Danish prize). Only prints w/ English dialogue or subtitles accepted. Unless agreed otherwise the fest must recieve the print before Feb. 20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: NF, Kim Foss, Fest Dir., St. Kannikestræde 6, DK-1169, Copenhagen, Denmark; 011 45 3312 0005; fax: 45 3312 7505; kim@natfilm.dk; www.natfilm.dk

TRANSMEDIALE, Feb. 11-20, Germany. Deadline: Oct.29 (video, CD-Rom, Internet, TV, animation). Int'l media art fest held in Berlin for video, media installations & performances, CD-ROM, internet projects, computer animation, and innovative TV productions. Awards: Transmediale award DM 7.500, Student Award DM 5.000. Formats: Beta SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Contact: Transmediale, Klosterstr. 68-70, Berlin, Germany 10179; 011 49 30 24 72 19 07; fax: 49 30 24 72 19 09; info@transmediale.de; www.transmediale.de

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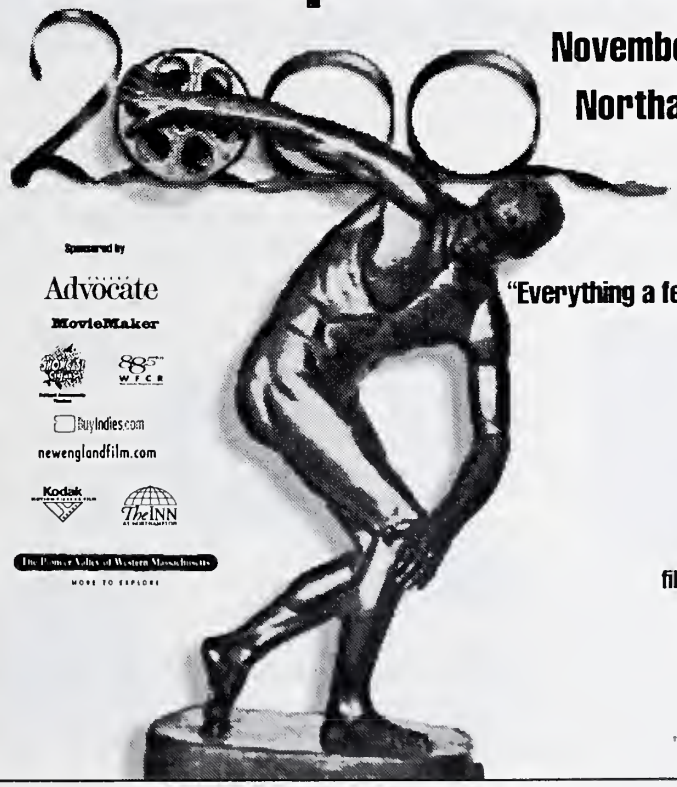
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COMPETITIONS

6TH ANNUAL SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION awards $300 & video copy of 16mm film. Any subject or genre, original or adaptation (if you have rights); suitable to up to 30 min. low-budget production. No entry fee or application; scripts will not be returned. Deadline: Dec. 1. Send screenplay synopsis to: Screenplay Competition, School of Comm., Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401. For more info call: Prof. Philbin (616) 895-3668; philbinj@gvsu.edu

COLUMBUS SCREENPLAY DISCOVERY AWARD: To bridge the gap between writers & the entertainment industry. One screenplay accepted monthly to receive rewrite notes from script consultant. Awards: Up to $10,000 option, script analysis, film courses, conferences, software. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $55. Contact: Columbus Screenplay Discovery Awards, 433 N. Camden Dr., Ste. 600, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (310) 288-1988; fax: 288-0257; awards@HollywoodNetwork.com; www.HollywoodNetwork.com

DRAMA GARAGE THURSDAY NIGHT SCRIPT READING SERIES: Drama Garage holds a once a month script reading at Occidental Studios in L.A. w/ professional director & professional actors. Chosen writer receives a copy of Final Draft software & is interviewed by IntheBiz.net, a web site & private networking organization for assistants in the entertainment industry assistants to agents & producers who are looking for new talent. Awards: Final Draft software, professional reading, interview w/ IntheBiz.net. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $25. For appl. see web site for rules & submission info. Contact: Drama Garage, 1861 N. Whitley, Ste. 205, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 993-5700; www.dramagarage.com

ERIK BARNOW AWARD recognizes outstanding reporting or programming on network or cable TV, or in documentary film concerned w/ American history, the study of Amer. history, &/or the promotion of history. Only works released in 2000 are eligible for the award to be given in 2001. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Erik Barnouw Award, Organization of American Historians, 112 N. Bryan Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47408-4199; (812) 855-9852; fax: (812) 855-0696; kara@oah.org

***FADE IN* SCREENWRITING AWARDS:** Cash prizes & industry exposure from *Fade In* magazine. Entries accepted in five cats: (comedy, action/adventure, thriller, drama, film noir) & two formats (features, shorts). Scripts must not have been optioned at time of entry or at time material is chosen as finalist or Grand Prize winner. Submissions must be an original work of the applicant & not based, in whole or part, on another author's work. Awards: Grand Prize: Apple Performa computer, plus an expense-paid trip (hotel & airfare, or cash equivalent to $1,000) to meet w/ top literary agents & studio execs for three days & two nights. 1st prize (in each cat): $500, Waterman fountain pen, Final Draft software & one year *Fade In* subscription. 2nd prize (in each cat): $250, script analysis by WGA-credited writer, subscription. 3rd prize (in each cat): $100, script analysis, subscription. Entry fee: $40. Deadline: Oct. 30. Contact: *Fade In*: Screenwriting Awards, 289 S. Robertson Blvd. Ste. 465, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (800) 646-3896; www.fadeinmag.com

FILM ESCAPADE: Juried competition seeks shorts & features. Cash prizes. Cats incl. narrative, doc, animation, exp., music video. Preview on VHS, 16mm; entry fee: $15 (shorts); $20 (features); Deadline: Dec. 10. to enter send s.a.s.e. to Miller/McCann Film Escapade, Box 54320, Philadelphia, PA 19105; fax: (610) 992-9128; FilmMiller@aol.com; Dziga24@aol.com; www.filmescapade.freeservers.com

HOLLYWOOD SCREENPLAY CONSULTANTS SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: Seeking quality screenplays for Hagan Productions, Inc. to produce & Cine-Vision 2000 to distribute. Looking for low budget (less than $1.5 million), character or story driven, feature film screenplays. They should be live action, 1 or 2 locations is ideal, 10 or less characters, 90-120 pgs. Any genre considered. Cats: feature film, short film, animated film, TV movie, TV miniseries, TV series (currently in production or not). Entries must not have been sold, optioned, be in turnaround, or be in preproduction or have been produced at the time of submitted deadline. Prizes: 1st: $2,000; 2nd: $1,000; 3rd: $500. A prominent agent, a WGA signatory agency, will consider the winners for representation. Entry fee: $75 per screenplay. Deadlines: Dec. 1. For more info: 17216 Saticoy St., #303, Van Nuys, CA, 91406; (818) 994-5977.

IFP/WEST INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS 16th annual event annouces two new categories: "Best Documentary" and "Best Feature Under $500,000." 12 other categories accepting entries as well, see web site for complete details. Deadline: 5 p.m. Oct. 13. Contact: IFP/West, 1964 Westwood Blvd. Ste. 205, L.A., CA 90025; (310) 475-4379; www.ifpwest.org

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST: Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted, contest limited to first 500 entries. First prize: $1,500. Deadlines: Dec. 29 (early); Jan. 31 (final). Entry fees: $40 (early); $50 (final). See web site or send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (831) 646-0910; mryfilm@aol.com; www.filmmonterey.org

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature-length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ $40 entry fee payable to NTV, 21 Central Park West, Ste. 1T, NY, NY 10023.

PLASTIC ENTERTAINMENT SCREENPLAY CONTEST for unproduced feature length scripts only. Deadline: Dec. 31. $10,000 grand prize must be awarded! All genres. No restrictions. Winning script (& others) may be further optioned or purchased for production by Plastic Ent., Inc. (you retain all rights until sale is negotiated). Send script w/ $40 entry fee (check or M.O.), payable to: Plastic Ent., Inc., 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hollywood, CA 90069.

SANTA FE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION; Co-founded by screenwriting teacher & author Rick Reichman & award-winning writer/director Larry N. Stouffer, is accepting submissions through Oct. 31. Top five awards: $2,000, $1,000, $500, $250, $125; next 15 finalists get $50 each. Top five also get free tuition annual screenwriting conference held in Santa Fe Memorial Day weekend. Entries receive script critique & notes. Call (505) 424-1501; www.SFeSC.com

BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOC. NATIONAL STUDENT SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION is designed to promote & recognize outstanding student scripts in the cats of feature film, short film & TV series. All full- & part-time students, undergrad or graduate, in U.S. institutions of higher education. Awards: $200 check, software from Screenplay Systems Inc., book of choice from Focal Press. Deadline: Jan. 2001. Contact: Broadcast Education Assoc., Dept. of Comm.; CA State Univ., Fullerton, CA 92834; (714) 278-5399; fax: 278-2209; efink@fullerton.edu;www.marquette.edu/bea/write/STU-00-COMP.htm

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

ACTION CUT DIRECTING SEMINARS; Guy Magar, director of over 40 DGA productions incl. indie films & TV, brings his intensive weekend seminar to Atlanta, GA Oct. 14-15, L.A., CA Nov. 4-5, Houston, TX Nov, 11-12, Vancouver, Canada Nov. 18-19. Workshop incl. 14 film studies illustrating the director's involvement from casting/location,



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Since its inception in 1997, Ocularis has presented programs of independent shorts, experimental work, documentary film and special cinematic events, to become an enduring and significant microcinema. Located at the Galapagos Art and Performance Space (an old converted mayonnaise factory) in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the series has co-hosted numerous programs and collaborated with curators from a variety of local and national film festivals, museums, and other microcinemas. In addition to showcasing local artists on a regular basis, the series also welcomes nationwide short film submissions on 16mm to precede each week's primary screening. See listing.

shot lists, dailies & the finished film edited w/ effects/sound/music. Course benefits writers, producers, editors, anyone interested in maximizing creative partnership w/ the director. Discounts to early birds, students, WIFT members. (800) 815-5545; www.actioncut.com

IFFCON 2001 The 8th Int'l Film Financing Conference, Jan. 12-14 in San Francisco. 60 selected producers meet w/ industry executives for an intensive weekend of roundtables, private meetings & receptions. Join us at IFFCON to Redefine the Box. Deadline: Oct. 13. For info & applications, visit www.iffcon.com or call (415) 281-9777.

INTERNATIONAL FILM SEMINARS INC. is a NY-based nonprofit organization est. in 1960 which has evolved from a small, informal gathering of filmmakers & students to a respected, est. media arts institution, recognized as leader in continuing the tradition of docs & other independent film & video in their production, exhibition, scholarship & study. Int'l Film Seminar, 462 Broadway, Ste. 510, NY, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax: 925-3482; ifsnyc@aol.com

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL FILM & PRODUCTION WORKSHOP, in 24th year, is unique "hands-on" program. Workshop emphasizes training & support of people of color who have limited resources & access to mainstream educational institutions & training programs. Intensive 8-month, 8-10 participants, program focuses on preproduction, production & postproduction skills necessary to take a project from conception to completion. Prior film, video or related experience strongly recommended but not req.; self-initiative, time & collaborative spirit is. Initial written appl. required & 2nd round of applicants selected for interviews. Cost: $500. Deadline: Oct. 15. Workshop begins early Jan. 2001. For appl. send SASE to: Third World Newsreel, Production Workshop, 545 8th Ave., 10th fl., New York, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277 x. 301; www.twn.org

Films • Tapes Wanted

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for indep. shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to *Bijou Matinee*, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital submissions of 30 min. or less on on-going basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Artists paid honorarium & will qualify for non-exclusive distribution deals. Looking for short, narrative, alternative, anim., underground works. Works selected will, in most cases, continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings. Submit VHS/S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone no. along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Blackchair Prods., 2318 2nd Ave., PMP #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com. Unable to return submissions.

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING FILM PROGRAM, hosted by Film Society of Lincoln Center, is currently seeking original films or videos, from 1-20 min., to incl. w/ monthly screenings of open-captioned featured films at Walter Reade Theater. Films w/ artistic involvement from deaf artists preferred, but not req. Seeking original work that can be understood by deaf audience; dialogue must be subtitled. Send VHS copy to: Film Society of Lincoln Center,

MAKE MOVIES

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Deaf & Hard of Hearing Film Program, 165 W. 65th St., 4th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; sbensman@dti.net

FIREWATER FILMS, the only year-round short film series in NYC, seeks short film submissions (cats: narrative, doc., animation & experimental). Films are shown on both VHS & 16mm formats at the Big Top Theater. Firewater Films, Box 20039, NY, NY 10025-1510; (212) 414-5419; fax: 724-8190; www.firewaterfilms.com

IFP ABROAD: For the 4th year, IFP will be presenting AIM: American Independents at the Market, program of ten new American ind. films at the European Film Market (Berlin Film Festival), Feb. 2000. Objective is to ensure greater attention for Amer. indies & to assist these filmmakers in securing distrib. interest in Europe. Films chosen for showcase will receive one free Market screening, comp registration at the IFP booth, $500 stipend toward traveling costs & promotion by IFP's advertising campaign for Berlin. Previous AIM selections incl. *Genghis Blues, Drylongso, Home Page, The Delta* & *Six Ways to Sunday*. Deadline: Nov 17. Non-refundable fee: $25. IFP also provides support services & home base for filmmakers & companies attending Berlin who register w/ our booth. Appl. for AIM & booth services avail. after Oct. 15. Contact: Colin Stanfield (212) 465-8200 x. 210; cstan@ifp.org

INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION: cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic, animation & underground works for incl. in the fall season. Controversial, uncensored & subversive material encouraged. We guarantee exposure in NYC area. Contact: Edmund Varuolo c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

KQED-TV, public TV serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. in length for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, sdwyer@kqed.org; (415) 553-2218.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede evening's feature, plus brief Q&A w/ aud. Works longer than 15 min. considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Works on 16mm w/ optical track only. Send films w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

POTHOLE PICTURES, a revitalized 450-seat movie house in MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series—a showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length/genre. Connection to New England thru subject matter, locations, or filmmakers helpful but not necessary. Send VHS tape to: Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod @javanet.com

REEL ALTERNATIVE FILM SALON; Brooklyn's original microcinema featuring indie filmmakers of color seeks film & script submissions for its 2nd season. All genres & formats welcome. Special interests in mysteries & suspense thrillers for Oct., female action flicks for March & animation for April. Film (submitted on VHS) & script submissions must incl. synopsis, bio & $10 (check/M.O.). Films screened monthly & scripts staged quarterly. Contact: (718) 670-3616; www.ighmultimedia.com

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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Includes: one year's subscription to The Independent • access to group insurance plans • discounts on goods and services from national Trade Partners • online and over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars, screenings, and events • book discounts • classifieds discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members-only web services

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SOUTHERN STORIES FOUNDATIONS announces the Annual Evening Of Short Films on Dec. 7 at the Birmingham Museum Of Art's Steiner Auditorium. This is a call for entries for all video- & filmmakers to submit their short film for screening during this important event. Work must be submitted on VHS video format & must be no longer than 30 min. Deadline: Nov. 24. Filmmakers are encouraged to be present to participate in the evening's events, meet the audience & answer questions about their work. Send VHS tape to: Pat Gallagher, Southern Stories Foundation, Box 6409, Montgomery, AL 36106; (334) 221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS, one of the largest multidisciplinary contemporary arts centers in the Midwest, invites proposals for solo, group & curated visual arts exhibitions for the 2000/2001 season. Seeking innovative work in all media incl. installation. Also accepting visual arts proposals for an exhibition of work in April addressing environmental impact of materials used in creating visual art. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: UICA Race St., Gallery, 41 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids, ZMI 49503; (616) 454-7000 x. 10; fax: 454-7013

WGBH-TV, Boston: Ever thought about broadcasting your independent film on TV? WGBH is committed to supporting independent filmmakers, incl. those who may never have considered local TV broadcast an option. We're looking for top notch independent films & videos to be part of our ongoing local independent film series *Viewpoint*, showcasing works from across New England & around the world. Films selected for broadcast receive an honorarium. Tapes accompanied by SASE will be returned. Broadcast masters will need to be on DigiBeta, BetaSP, D5 or D3. In accordance w/ WGBH's technical standards we cannot accept programming produced for public access cable. Send VHS screening copies of your doc, narrative film, or animation (no length requirements) to: Chad Davis, Viewpoint, WGBH-TV, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; 617-300-2647; chad_davis@wgbh.org

ZOIE FILMS INTERNET FESTIVAL, March. Deadline: Feb. 2nd annual fest will present approx. 30-50 films during the year & showcases more than 60 filmmakers. New domestic & foreign films, fiction films & docs, animation, experimental works, children's programs & film shorts will be incl. in fest. Awards incl. Zoie Star Award for Best Picture (domestic & foreign) People's Choice Awards & Certificates for various placements. Contact: Zoie Films, 539 Salem Woods Dr., Marietta, GA 30067; (404) 816-0602; fax: 560-6777; www.zoiefilms.com /filmfestxprt.htm

Publications

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for incl. in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4506; fax: 399-4507; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

CANYON CINEMA announces the publication of a major new catalog of avant-garde/experimental films & video tapes for rent & sale. This 500 page volume of the Canyon Cinema Catalog 2000 (#8) contains 285 illustrations & describes over 3,500 works of cinematic art

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GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions avail. in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp. & NY State Dept. of Taxation & Finance, 51-pg reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & TV Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION: Find an independent audience! IPA's directory to the independent magazine world can give you the name & number of the editor you need. For just $24.95 (plus $3.05 S&H) *Annotations: A Guide to the Independent Press* can open up a world of diverse & exciting contacts. For order send a check to: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 634-4401; www.indypress.org

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: *Essential Resource for Making Independent Film, Video, & New Media.* 2000 ed. Includes nat'l & int'l festival listings, distribs, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media funding sources & schools. Contact: BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org

Resources • Funds

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers the Chase Manhattan Smarts Regrants Program. Total of $18,000 in awards available to NYC Asian Amer. arts orgs w/ annual budgets of $100,000 or less (must have 501 (c)(3) status or Charities Bureau Registration. Deadline: late fall. Contact: Chanchal Dadlani (212) 941-9208

ASTRAEA provides grants up to $10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Deadline: Nov. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321; www.astraea.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501(c)(3), nonprofit arts education org dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equip., computer notebooks & screenwriting software in good working order. Donations of equip. are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Dir., (201) 444-9875.

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents this interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Artists' foundation committed to supporting individual artists is accepting appls. Download from: www.creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900. Deadline: Oct. 31.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative, anim. & exper. projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

FREE SOUNDTRACK SONGS if you credit song in your film credits. Professionally produced & mastered CD with 22 punk, rock, alternative, dance, love songs. Call John at Road Rash Music (ASCAP publisher) (703) 481-9113.

FREE VIDEO RECORDING: Open call to independent artists for Promote Art Works Inc.'s "Spontaneous Combustion" series, which airs monthly on Brooklyn Community Access TV. All fields; dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater will be entertained. No works in progress accepted. Quality videotapes also accepted for editing. Call Kathleen (718) 797-3116.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on issues w/in one of foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MEDIA ACTION GRANTS offered by Media Alliance provides orgs w/ up to $1,000 for conferences, workshops & events designed to strengthen upstate media arts communities & networking at a state-wide level. Events should take place between Jan. 1-June 30, 2001. Grant not intended to duplicate funds from other sources, particularly NYSCA. Deadline: Nov. 9. Contact: Media Alliance c/o WNET, 450 W. 33rd St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 560-2919; fax: 560-1314 (Attn: Media Alliance); mediaactiongrant@hotmail.com; www.mediaalliance.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: Summer Seminars & Institutes for college & univ. teachers. Seminars incl. 15 participants working in collaboration w/ one or two leading scholars. Institutes provide intensive collaborative study of texts, histroical periods & ideas to undergrad teaching in the humanties. Detailed info & appl. materials are avail. from project directors. Contact: (202) 606-8463; sem-inst@neh.gov; www.neh.gov

NATIONAL LATINO COMMUNICATIONS CENTER is a media arts production resource center that supports, produces & syndicates Latino programming for public TV. Its purpose is to empower Latinos in the U.S. throughout the broadcast communications media. Its mission is to pro-

vide to the nation quality programming which illuminates the diversity of the nat'l Latino ethos through expressions of its arts, cultures & histories; provide a sustained institutional framework for expressing the Latino voice in the nat'l, int'l film & communications industry; provide training & related assistance to develop & support Latino media talent. Contact: NLCC, 3171 Los Feliz Blvd., Ste. 200, LA, CA 90039; (213) 663-5606; www.nlcc.com

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM AND TV is the preminent entertainment industry assoc. for women in NYC dedicated to helping women reach the highest levels of achievement in film, TV & new media. Assoc. produces over 50 innovative educational programs & special events each year. Membership numbers over 1,100 women & men working in all areas of the film, TV, and new media industries & is part of a network of 40 women in film orgs worldwide, representing more than 1,000 members. For more info., contact: NYWIFT, 6 East 39th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10016; staff@nywift.org; www.nywift.org

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM: A unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable Industry Directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 unique visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites are free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEWPROJECT.NET provides a new vehicle for producers in search of partnerships, financing & distribution for their projects. An online database of presentations of projects in development, in production, or recently completed, NewProject.net is a place where professionals can "publish" & announce their copyrighted new projects & present them to programming execs, distrib. companies, potential underwriters, investors & other partners.

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Ind. Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

NYS COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Individual Artists Program offers production funds for video, radio, audio, installation & computer-based art. Max award is $25,000. Artist must also be sponsored by a nonprofit org. Deadline: March 1. Contact: Don Palmer, NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7063; dpalmer@nysca.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in doc, exp., or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Camera avail. on year-round basis. No deadline; allow 10 wks min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

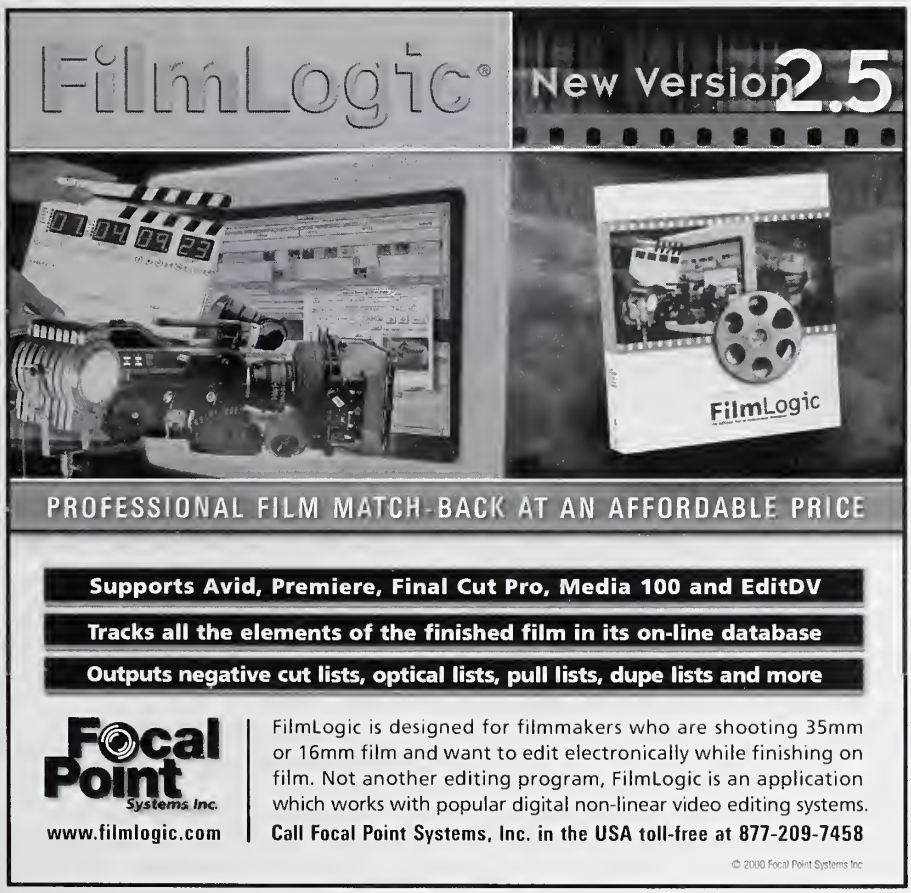
PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE w/ 55¢ stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

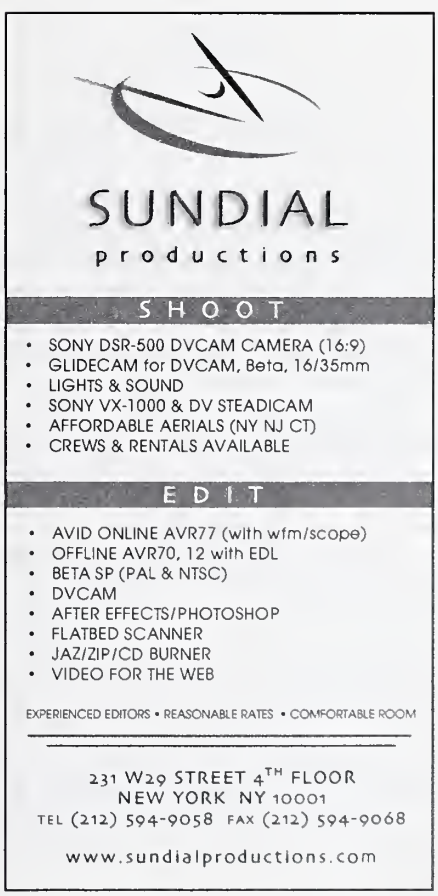
SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, free expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project cats: initial seed funds (up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average $25,000, max. $50,000). Highly competitive. Contact: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Inst., 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post production services at discounted rates. For rate card & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES offers Major Project Grants supporting public events on humanities topics for audiences throughout the state. Programs funded by NYCH take many forms: conferences, lecture series, panels, reading & discussion programs, museum exhibits, film series, online exhibitions & walking tours. The common denominator in all Council-sponsored projects is an emphasis upon "the humanities." Major Project Grants range btwn. $2,500 & $15,000. Deadline: Nov. 1. Appl. & guidelines at www.culturefront.org/culturefront/nych/grants/; hum@echonyc.com

THIRD ANNUAL CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FUND: $500-$2,000 postproduction completion grant for any length & genre, super 8, 16mm or 35mm. Emphasis placed on works that fit CUFF's mission to promote films & videos that innovate in form or content. Deadline: Feb. 1, 2001. Contact CUFF, 3109, North Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 327-FILM; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org





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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events require advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, AmEx, or Mastercard or mail a check or money order. Your check must be received one week prior to event to reserve your seat. Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.

Please Note: reservations are required for all AIVF events, unless otherwise noted. Due to space limitations, we will hold all reserved seats until 5 minutes before the event, upon which unclaimed seats will be given to walk-ins.

Some details were being confirmed at press time. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

October

AIVF BOARD ELECTIONS

Vote for the AIVF board of directors! Only paid AIVF members are eligible to vote in the AIVF board elections. If your membership expires on or before October 15, 2000 and you do not renew, you will not be eligible to vote. To verify your membership status or to renew, contact members@aivf.org or call (212) 807.1400 x. 236. Nominee statements and ballots will be mailed in late October and responses are due postmarked December 1, 2000.

AFTER HOURS
MEMBER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE

When: **First Wednesday** of every month (Oct. 4), from 6-9 p.m.; Library is open weekdays 11-6.
Cost: free to all; no RSVP necessary.

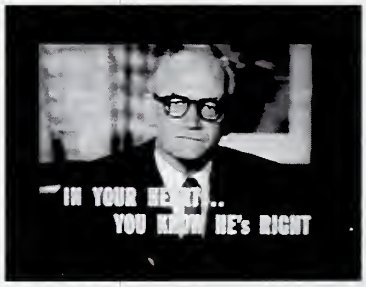
Our Filmmaker Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories and trade magazines to sample grant proposals and budgets. After Hours is the opportune time to utilitize the library, renew your membership, or buy FIVF-published books.

MEET & GREET:
FIRST RUN/ICARUS FILMS

When: Thurs., **Oct. 19**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free/AIVF members; $10 general public

FIRST RUN ICARUS FILMS

First Run/Icarus Films was formed 13 years ago, when Icarus Films and First Run Features merged their nontheatrical divisions to create a new company. They now distribute over 700 films and videos from around the world. Titles include *An American Love Story*, *Blood in the Face*, *Female Misbehavior*, *42-Up*, *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, *Sunrise Over Tiananmen Square*, and *South*, an anthology of 27 works created by film- and videomakers from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. First Run/Icarus emphasizes informative works that provide forums for voices that all too often go unheard and prides itself in its belief that their collection has always featured outstanding social, political and historical documentaries, ethnographic, animated and feature films.



DOCUMENTARY DIALOGUES:
THE ROLE OF THE EDITOR
CO-PRESENTED BY DOCFEST, THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

When: Wed., **Oct 25**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wine & Goldfish reception follows
Cost: $5/AIVF members & docfest friends only

Documentary Dialogues is a bi-monthly discussion group comprised of AIVF nonfiction filmmakers. Topics encompass theoretical and philosophical perspectives and approaches to independent film- and videomaking.

What is the editor's role in crafting nonfiction programs? This month's discussion will examine various models of working relationships between directors and editors, with a focus on how new, inexpensive technologies have changed traditional practices and opened up new models of creative input.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS
SELECT SCREENINGS AT THE WALTER READE THEATRE, NYC, PRESENTED BY THE FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members may attend specific films for just $5 per ticket! Please show membership card at box office. The Walter Reade Theatre is located at Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St. at Broadway in NYC. For more info, contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

Oct. 7-8: Avant-Garde Festival
Oct. 19: Independent's Night: *Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey*
Oct. 30: Image Innovators: Antonio Muntadas & Marshall Reese's compilation of Presidential campaign ads, *Political Advertisement 2000*.

OUTSIDE NEW YORK:
SOUND UNSEEN FILM FESTIVAL (OCT 6-13)

Where: Minneapolis, Minnesota
For further info: (612) 627-4430; www.ufilm.org

FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, and information services. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:





The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation
The Chase Manhattan Foundation
Forest Creatures Entertainment, Inc.
Heathcote Art Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
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Albert A. List Foundation, Inc.
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
The National Endowment for the Arts
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs: Cultural Challenge Program
New York Foundation for the Arts: TechTAP
New York State Council on the Arts

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Business/Industry Members: **CA**: Action/Cut Directed By Seminars; Film Society of Ventura County; Focal Point Systems, Inc.; Forest Creatures Entertainment Co.; Idea Live; Marshall/Stewart Productions, Inc.; No Justice Pictures, LLC; ProMax Systems Inc.; Somford Entertainment; Vineyard Ventures; **CT**: Bagel Fish Prod.; **CO**: Intrepid Film & Video Inc.; **DC**: Consciousness Squared Communications; **FL**: Green Solutions; MegaMedia Networks, Inc.; Odysseas Entertainment, Inc.; Tiger Productions, Inc.; **IL**: Optimus; **MA**: Coolidge Corner Theatre Fdtn.; CS Associates, Glidecam Industries; Harvard Medical School; **MD**: Imagination Machines, The Learning Channel; **MI**: Grace & Wild Studios, Inc.; **NJ**: Black Maria Film Festival; Diva Communications, Inc.; James J. Lennox; NewProject.Net; **NY**: All In One Promotions, Inc.; American Montage; Analog Digital Intl.; Arc International Entertainment Corp.; Archive Films, Inc.; Asset Pictures; Bagel Fish Productions; Bluestocking Films, Inc.; Bravo Film And Video; The Bureau for At-Risk Youth; Cineblast! Productions; Cine·L'Mod Inc.; Corra Films; Cypress Films; Deconstruction Co.; Trudi DeSouza; Dekart Video; Dependable Delivery, Inc.; DMZ Productions; Duart; DV8 Video Inc.; Earth Video; Ericson Media Inc; Fireballs Films, Ltd.; Golden Cinema Enterprises, Inc.; Harmonic Ranch; Inkling Productions; Kitchen Cinema; Kitchen Sync Group, Inc.; Mad Mad Judy; Media Services; Mercer St. Sound; Mixed Greens; Motion Picture Productions; Nuclear War Prod.; Normal Networks; The Outpost Digital; Parallax Pictures, Inc.; Partisan Pictures; Paul Dinatale Post, Inc.; Pitch Productions, Inc.; Prime Technologies; SeaHorse Films; Son Vida Pictures, LLC; Sound Mechanix; Streamedia Communications, Inc; Stuart Math Films, Inc.; The Tape Company; Tribune Pictures; Undergroundfilm.Com; Wolfen Productions; Wonder Entertainment; **PA**: Smithtown Creek Productions; **TN**: The Filmworkers Club; **TX**: Rose Noble Entertainment; **UT**: KBYU-TV; Rapid Video, LLC; **VA**: Roland House, Inc.; **WA**: Amazon.com; Global Griot Prod.; **Canada**: Fraser/Scott Enterprises; **France**: Kendal Productions; **Italy**: Omnibus Pictures S.L.

Nonprofit Members: **AL**: Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival; **AZ**: University of Arizona; Women's Studies/Northern Arizona University; Scottsdale Community College; **CA**: Film Arts Foundation; Filmmakers Alliance; Intl. Buddhist Film Festival; ITVS; Los Angeles Film Commission; NAATA; NAMAC; San Francisco Jewish Festival; USC School of Cinema TV; University of California Extension, CMIL; Victory Outreach Church; Whispered Media; **CO**: Denver Center for the Performing Arts; **CT**: Film Fest New Haven; **DC**: Corporation for Public Broadcasting; **GA**: IMAGE; **HI**: Aha Punana Leo; University of Hawaii; **ID**: Center for School Improvement; **IL**: The Art Institute of Chicago; Chicago Underground Film Festival; Columbia College; Community Television Network; Facets; Little City Foundation; MacArthur Foundation; **KY**: Appalshop; **LA**: New Orleans Film Festival; **MA**: CCTV; Long Bow Group Inc; Laurel Cable Network; LTC Communications; Somerville Community TV; **MD**: Laurel Cable Network; Native Vision Media; **ME**: Bar Harbor Film Festival; **MI**: Ann Arbor Film Festival; **MN**: Bush Artist Fellowships; IFP/North; Intermedia Arts; Walker Arts Center; **MO**: Webster University Film Series; **MS**: Magnolia Indie Festival; **NC**: Doubletake Documentary Film Fest; **NE**: Nebraska Independent Film Project, Inc.; **NY**: AARP New York State; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts, Inc.; Audrey Cohen College; Center for New American Media; Cinema Arts Center; Cornell Cinema; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Downtown Community TV; Educational Video Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Globalvision, Inc.; Guggenheim Museum SoHo; Hamptons Film Festival; John Jay High School; Konscious, Inc.; Manhattan Neighborhood Network; MoMA-Film Study Center; National Museum of the American Indian; National Video Resources; New York Film Academy; New York film Academy; New York Women In Film and Television; Open Society Institute/Soros Documentary Fund; Paper Tiger TV; Paul Robeson Fund/Funding Exchange; The Roth School Library; Spiral Pictures; Squeaky Wheel; The Standby Program; Stony Brook Film Festival; SUNY/Buffalo Dept. Media Studies; SUNY College/Fredona; Third World Newsreel; Thirteen/WNET; Upstate Films, Ltd.; Women Make Movies; **OH**: Athens Center For Film & Video; Media Bridges Cincinnati; Ohio Independent Film Festival; Ohio University-Film; Wexner Center; **OR**: Communication Arts, MHCC; Northwest Film Center; **PA**: Carnegie Museum of Art; PA/Council On The Arts; Philadelphia Film/Video Association; Pittsburgh Filmmakers; Scribe Video Center; Univ. of the Arts; **RI**: Flickers Arts Collaborative; RI School of Design/Film, Animation Dept; **SC**: South Carolina Arts Commission; **TN**: Nashville Independent Film Fest; **TX**: Austin Cinemaker Co-Op; Austin Film Society; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Southwest Alternate Media Project; Texas Film Commmission; U. of Texas Dept. Radio-TV-Film; Worldfest Houston; **WA**: 911 Media Arts. Center; Seattle Central Community College; **WI**: Madison Film Office; UWM Department of Film; University of Wisconsin Dept of Communcation Arts; **Argentina**: Lagart Producciones; **Germany**: International Shorts Film Festival; **India**: Foundation for Universal Responsibility

Millennium Campaign Fund

The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $112,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

Corporate/Government/ Foundation Contributors

BET/Encore; District Cablevision; Home Box Office; New York State Council on the Arts; Ovation; Washington DC Film Society.

Honorary Committee Members

(gifts of $500 or more)

AIVF DC Salon; Ralph Arlyck, Timed Exposures; Peter Buck; Hugo Cassirer, Felix Films; Martha Coolidge; Linda & Bob Curtis; Jacob Burns Foundation, Inc.; Loni Ding; Jacqueline Donnet; Karen Freedman & Roger Weisberg; Julie Goldman, WinStar Productions; David Haas; Henry Hampton*, Blackside, Inc.; Nik Ives; Bill Jersey, The Catticus Corporation; Richard Kaplan; Michael G. Kindle; Amie Knox; Deborah Kozee, C&S International Insurance Brokers; Leonard Merrill Kurz, Forest Creatures Entertainment; Richard Kylberg, Communicom; Tom LeGoff; Helaine & Sidney Lerner; Ruby Lerner; Peter Lewnes; Rick Linklater, Detour Film Foundation; Juan Mandelbaum; John Bard Manulis; Diane Markrow; Jim McKay, C-Hundred Film Corp.; Michel Negroponte; Sheila Nevins; Elizabeth Peters; David & Sandy Picker; R.E.M./Athens LLC; Barbara Roberts; James Schamus, Good Machine; John Schwartz; Robert L. Seigel; Liza Vann Smith; Miranda Smith; Michael Stipe; Ann Tennenbaum; Tower Records/ Videos/Books; Walterry Insurance Co.; Marc N. Weiss & Nancy Meyer; Martin Wills, TCI/District Cablevision; Robert E. Wise; Susan Wittenberg; Lawrence Zicklin, Jewish Communal Fund. (*deceased)

We also wish to thank the individuals and organizations who have recently made or renewed generous donations of $100 or more as **MCF Friends** (7/1/00 to 8/1/00): David Haas

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• Digital Audio Post	$ 85/hr.

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Contact Us for Services & Info.

PO Box 184 NY, NY 10012-0004
Tel: 212.219.0951
Fax: 212.219.0563
www.standby.org

AIVF proudly supports The Sound Unseen Film Festival, featuring one of the largest national collections of underground films on or about underground music, visits by award-winning filmmakers, special live music performances by the groups featured in the films, an audio CD companion to the festival, and select live soundtracks to silent films by prominent local musicians. AIVF will co-present a panel discussion with Insound.com.

THE DENVER FILM FESTIVAL (OCT. 12-21)

Where: Denver, Colorado.
For further info: (303) 595-3456; dfs@denverfilm.org; www.denverfilm.org

AIVF proudly co-sponsors the 23rd Denver International Film Festival (presented by the Denver Film Society). This year's festival celebrates the 10th anniversary of the coveted John Cassavetes Award with the world premiere screening of Charles Kiselyak's three hour-plus tour de force documentary *A Constant Forge: An Exploration of The Life And Art of John Cassavetes*. Gena Rowlands will present the 2000 Cassavetes Award to Sean Penn; Seymour Cassel, Peter Falk, Ben Gazzara and Cassavetes scholar Ray Carney will also be on hand for the 10th anniversary celebration. This year's Denver festival will include more than 100 films from around the world with over 75 film artists introducing and discussing their works with Rocky Mountain audiences.

CINEMATEXAS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL (OCT. 18-22)

Where: Austin, Texas
For further info: (512) 471-6497; cinematexas@cinematexas.org; www.cinematexas.org.



CINEMATEXAS 5 proudly presents 150 explosive international shorts in competition; the American premiere of banned shorts by Abbas Kiarostami; a retrospective on acclaimed filmmaker and photographer Robert Frank; Jim Jarmusch curates and presents in person his favorite shorts; "Parallax View", a culture-jamming and media activism forum hosted by agit-propist Craig Baldwin; a retrospective on the late Austrian avant-gardist Kurt Kren at the old airport; Miranda July's new performance *Swan Tool*; Austin Eye and Ear, an experimental music series; and more.

DOCSIDE FILM FESTIVAL (OCT. 27-29)

Where: The Grossman International Conference Center, San Antonio, Texas.
For further info: (210) 532-4901; dfproject@yahoo.com; www.docfilmproject.org

The Documentary Film Project, the only exclusively documentary film society in Texas, proudly announces the First Annual DocSide Film Festival. Docside will present 25 films and videos on the cutting edge of cultural, political, scientific and social issues and, through its panels and programs, build a network of communication and resources within San Antonio and throughout the U.S. Running concurrently with the Docside is GenerationDOCS, a symposium and student film competition especially designed for teen filmmakers. AIVF will co-present a discussion on regional filmmaking at GenerationDOCS as well as co-host other events at the Docside Festival.

BLOWIN' UP A SPOT! FILM FESTIVAL

Where: Houston, Texas (location pending at presstime)
For further info: www.freeversepublishing.com or (713) 220-9395

AIVF is proud to co-sponsor the 2nd Annual Blowin' Up A Spot! Film Festival in Houston Texas. Besides showcasing the work of independent media artists to the Southwest, this three-day women's festival promotes media literacy, and brings together a diverse audience of educators, poets, media makers and community-based organizations in Houston. Blowin Up A Spot! Media Arts Group is a grassroots arts/media activists collective that promotes media literacy education, multimedia art, urban art, energetic television art, and racial/cultural exchange.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.

See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wed. of each month, 6:30 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Anne del Castillo, (512) 322-0145; anne@austinfilm.org

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE, (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45 pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422; dot@inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, aivf_la@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, (414) 276-8563; www.mifs.org/salon

New Brunswick, NJ:
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668; dgproductions@hotmail.com

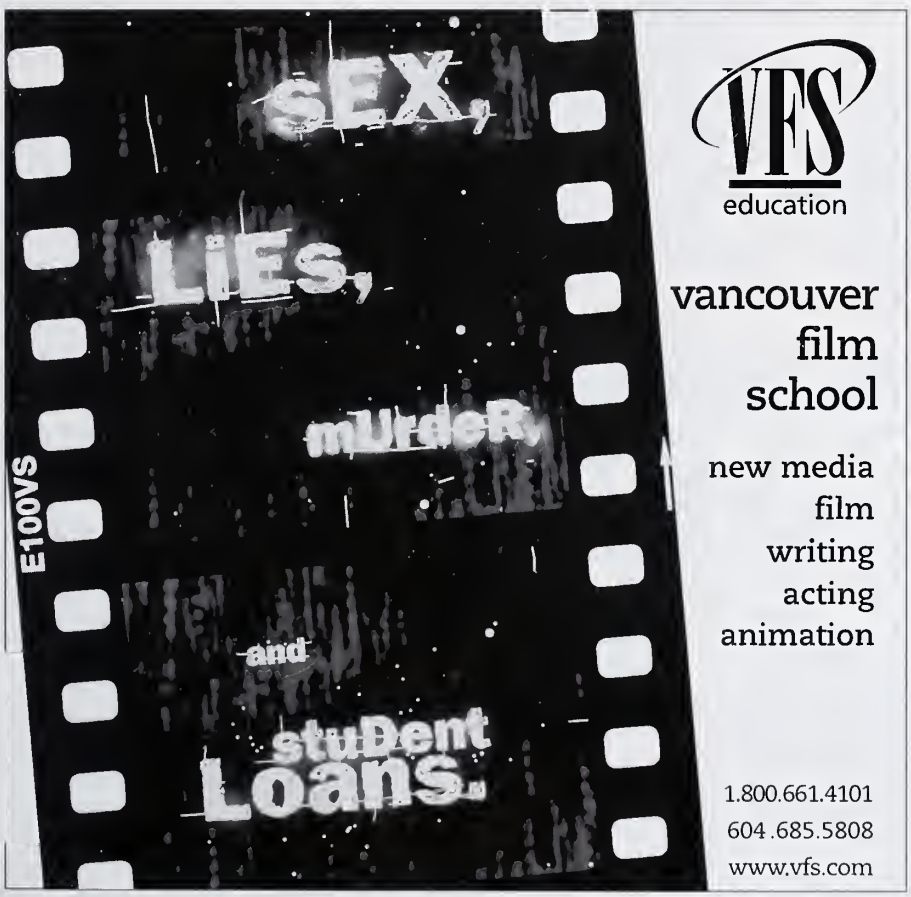
Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Kate Kressman-Kehoe, (716) 244-8629; ksk@netacc.net

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net



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This column commemorates the 25th anniversary of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the October issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.

"I can assure you that public broadcasting, both nationally and locally, is increasingly viewed by labor, by minorities, women, and many other groups as hostile to their interests."

Kathleen Nolan, 1980

"Congress is about to repeal basic laws which protect the basic interest in communications. Tacked on to the Budget Reconciliation Bill S. 1377 are several communication items [which], if they become law, will eliminate many of the important safeguards for a fair and democratic communications system. . . [W]e strongly urge the [House/Senate] conference to drop the Senate communication sections of the Budget Reconciliation Act."

Joint Press Statement on Senate broadcast deregulation by AIVF and 30 other organizations and individuals, 1981

"The educational market has been drying up over the last 10 years: the '80s aren't the '60s. We would call up libraries and there wouldn't be film departments any more. It was a low-priority item even in the best of times."

Freude Bartlett, 1983

"In a [July 19] decision that demolishes the cornerstone of the Federal Communications Commission's cable regulatory policy, a three-judge panel in Washington declared the FCC's must-carry rule, mandating cable carriage of all local broadcast signals, unconstitutional."

Debra Goldman, 1985

"It's ridiculous to sell video as one-of-a-kind work, because it's reproducible. It's also a false consciousness—if you make one, so it's worth more. Making art that's communicative, you should try to get it out there. The bottom line is art, not merchandise."

Gary Hill, 1987

"Appalshop, for its work as a media arts center; Experimental Television Center, for providing an oasis for experimentation in the electronic media; Edith Kramer, for her work as curator of the Pacific Film Archive; William Miles, for life achievement as an independent filmmaker; Fran Spielman, for her work in distribution of independent features; George Stoney, for his tireless advocacy of independent access to the media."

AIVF's Indie Awards, 1988



"[As a kid] they used to show Tarzan movies. And there was Tarzan who would pick up these Black guys, throw them across the river, and out-run them. He'd wipe out a whole village of Black warriors and we'd cheer, 'Yeah! Yeah!' We used to yell, 'Get him Tarzan! Yeah, get him Tarzan!' Identity crisis, right?"

Charles Burnett, 1988

"[I]n a voice vote on the floor of a nearly deserted Senate, less than a dozen lawmakers approved an amendment offered by South Carolina Republican Jesse Helms that would ban federal arts funds from being used to 'promote, disseminate, or produce obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts; or material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion.' "

Lucinda Furlong, 1989

"Originally scheduled to air the week of July 16 on *P.O.V.*, *Tongues Untied* was dropped by 18 of the top 50 market stations and rescheduled by numerous others after it was deemed offensive by some affiliate executives and right-wing activist Rev. Donald Wildmon."

Catherine Saalfield, 1991

"My associates and I aren't greedy. We understand what's important and that's to work."

Hal Hartley, 1992

"I'll be a walking, moving target, but what's new?"

Jim Yee, new ITVS exec.director, 1993

"*Hoop Dreams*' big splash looks like it will leave most of the participants better off than they ever hoped. The big exceptions, ironically, are the film's subjects, Agee and Gates. NCAA regulations prohibit them or their families from benefiting in any way [from the film], on pain of losing their scholarships."

Pat Aufderheide, 1994

"WNYC's unique program mix will likely be replaced with professional sports events as well as economic and business news, which Dow Jones would provide."

Jack Robertiello, 1995

"I'll always be acting, but I get restless as an actor—being on set and feeling like I have energy to burn. You do your turn, then have to wait for two or three hours. I noticed pretty quickly that the director is always active."

Steve Buscemi, 1996

"Being a white, pretentious, middle-class man I was always a bit shy in the presence of people not of my class. And kind of respectful. I learned to let them set the limits."

George Stoney, 1997

"I think it's impossible to be a 'fly on the wall'—we are in a relationship."

Jennifer Fox, 1998

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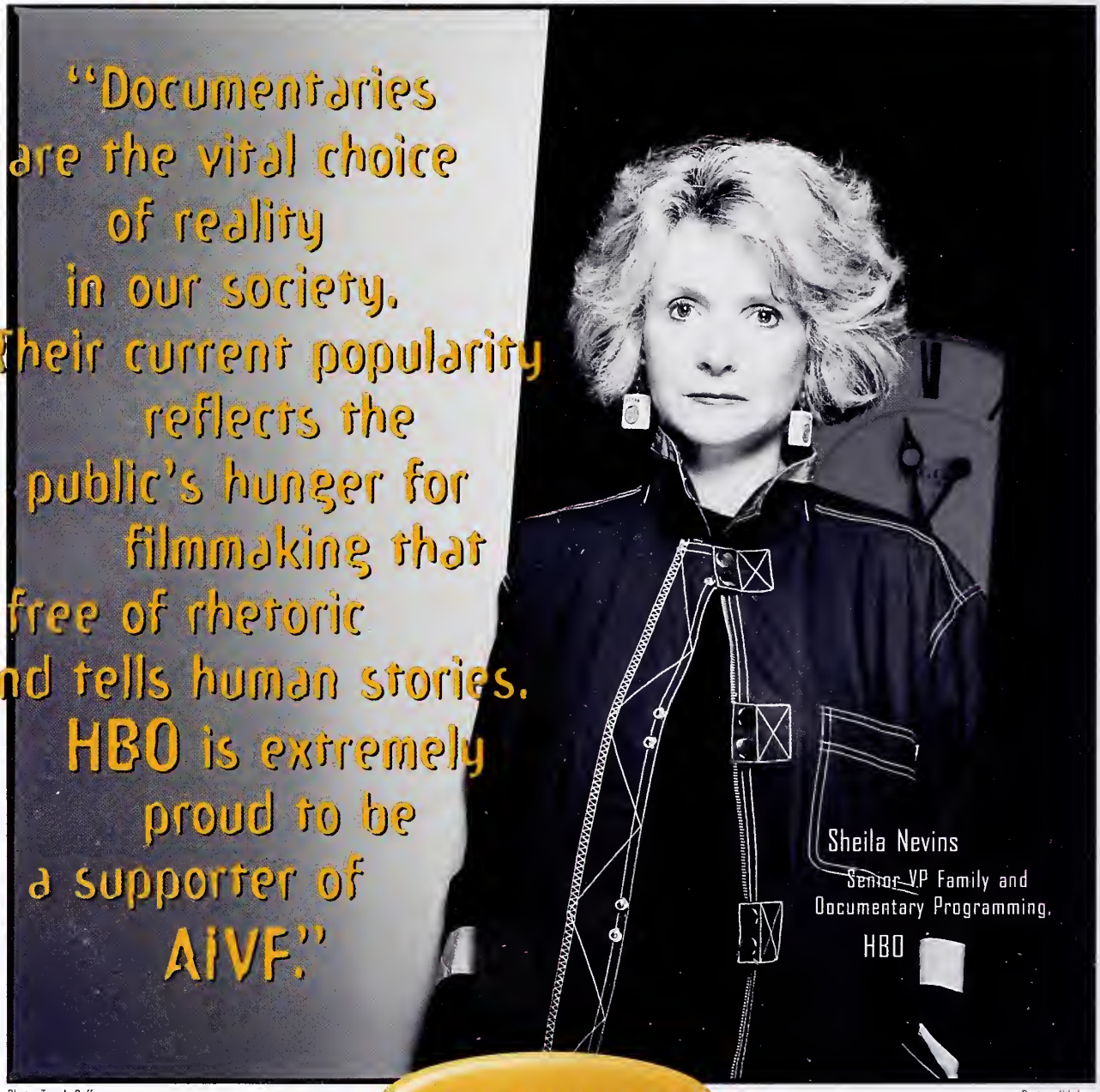


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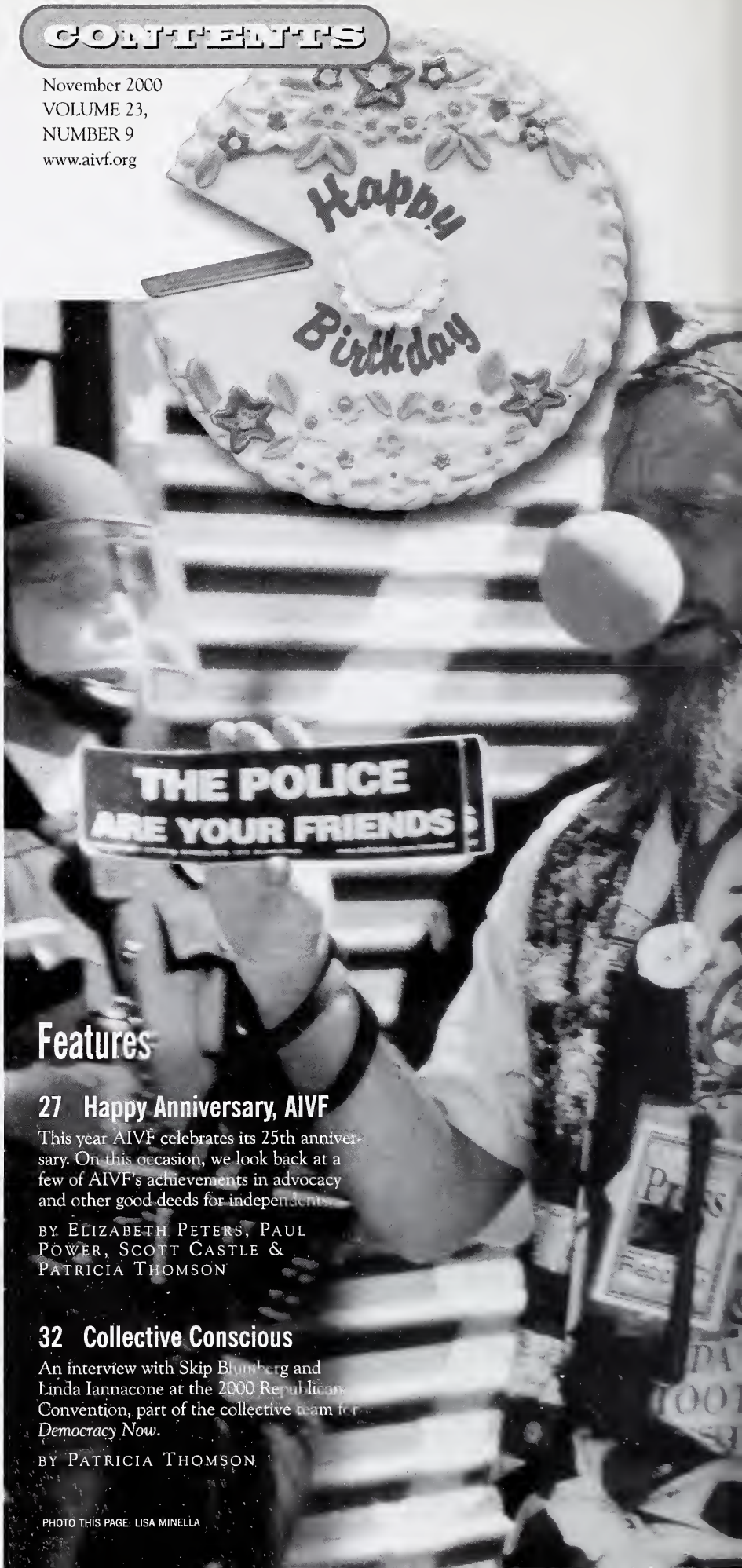
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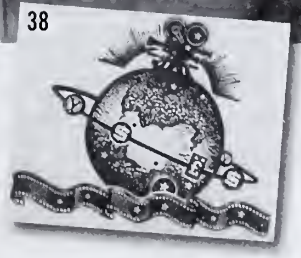












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Rich Uncle Oscar

How Hollywood's Biggest Night is Funding Indie Filmmakers

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND when you think of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is, of course, the Academy Awards—that one special night of the year where heavyweights strut their stuff on red carpets under the light of a thousand camera flashes. Big flowery acceptance speeches, Bruce Valanche jokes transmitted through the mouths of stars, and you, sitting on your couch, alternately mocking and admiring people—in any case, wishing you were there.

What you probably don't think of when pondering the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is the women filmmakers program at Midwest Media Artists Access Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. Yet the two actually have a lot in common, as the latter has received an annual grant for the past several years, provided by an educational and cultural wing of the Oscars. The Academy Foundation utilizes some of the enormous revenue generated by one of television's most profitable nights to fund various college film programs and indie film organizations across the country. This year, for example, the Academy Foundation handed out over $360,000 to 32 different cinema programs, ranging from a $25,000 grant to the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women, to a $4,000 grant to the Northwest Screenwriters Guild of Seattle. "Screenwriting guilds are a personal favorite," says Greg Beal, program coordinator of the Academy Foundation. "I also run the Academy's screenwriting program, so I come in contact with a lot of screenwriting groups, and I always urge them to apply."

One of the main focuses of the Academy Foundation, however, is on funding internships, allowing film students to take a (normally) unpaid internship in the film world without having to starve to death. Most of these grants go to film programs at places like UCLA, Columbia, and North Carolina School of the Arts. "We're very interested in funding anything that helps bridge the gap between people who want to join the film industry and those who are already in it," says Beal.



Marti Lufkin, a Minnesota-based director, is one of many independents benefiting from the Academy Foundation.

The really good news is that the Academy fund seems to be growing exponentially. From its first year in 1968, when it consisted of just $20,000, the fund grew slowly throughout the '70s and '80s, reaching $75,000 in 1990, supporting only fourteen organizations. More recently, however, the fund mushroomed into $360,000, supports 32 programs around the country, and continues to grow (next year's budget is estimated to be $400,000).

It's not just students who are receiving the help, either. Women, minorities, Native Americans, and even people over 40—anyone who is under-represented in the film industry—stand a good chance of receiving funds. Grants are rarely made to individuals, however. "We're looking for programs with some sort of history," Beal says. Yet that history can be anything from a film screening series, such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music series, to a visiting filmmaker's workshop at the Five Rivers Festival in Missoula, Montana, to promotion of this magazine. The Midwest Media Artists Access Center (MMAAC), an organization that provides low-cost equipment and production services to independent filmmakers in St. Paul, has been receiving grants (which account for half of their operating budget) from the Academy for all of the seven years of its existence. This year's grant of $3,500 will go toward offering women filmmakers like Althea Saricy, Marti Lufkin, and Mary Britton (who have made feature films, shorts, and music videos, respectively) credits of up to $17,000 for rentals and services, says Andrew Welken, access coordinator at MMAAC.

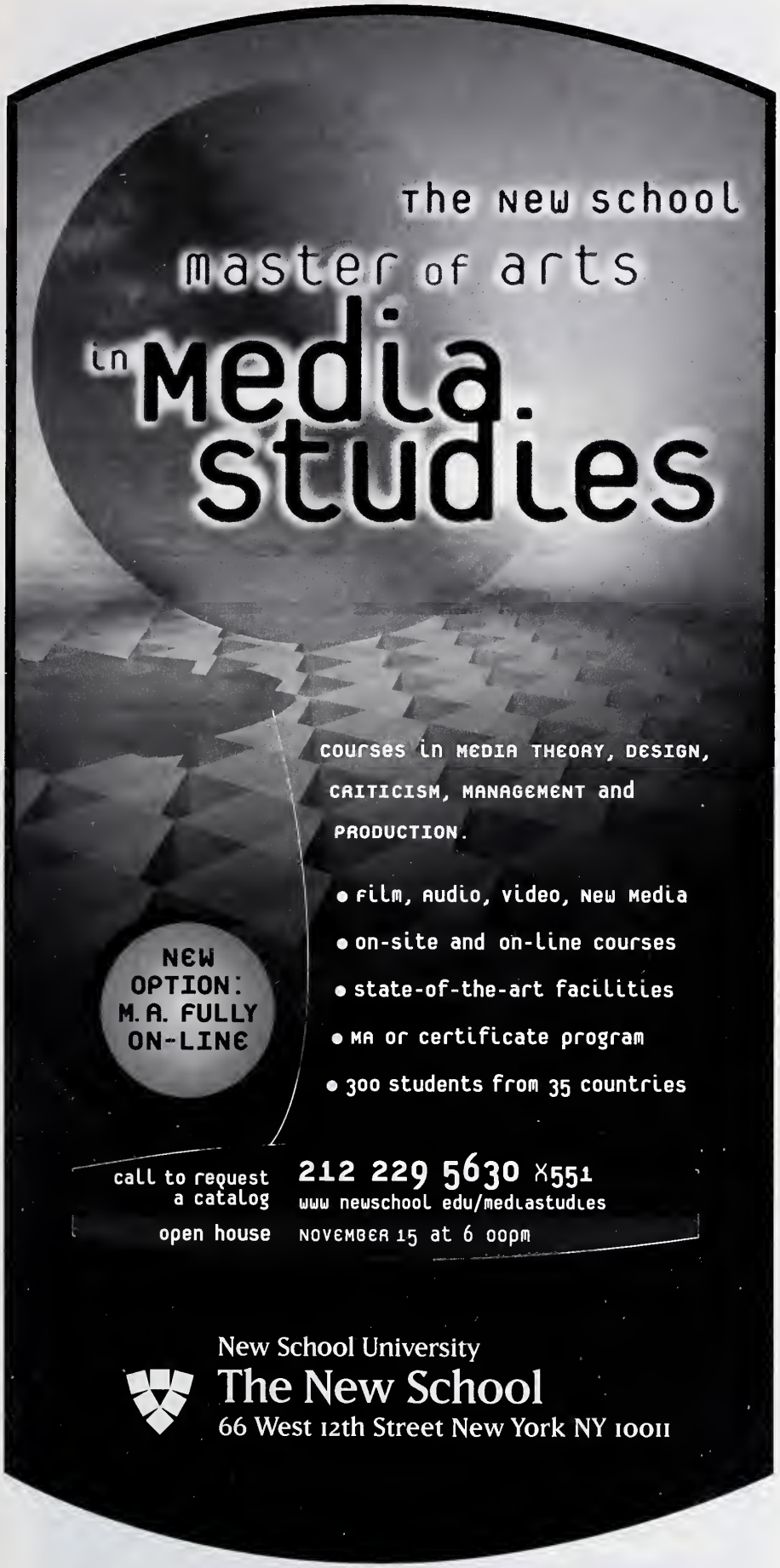
New technologies like digital filmmaking have also caught the Academy's eye. San Francisco's Film Arts Foundation (FAF) received $20,000 for digital filmmaking training. "A lot of the money goes towards education," says Gail Silva, FAF executive director. FAF also oversees a highly successful mentorship program called Support Training and Access for New Directors (STAND), Silva says, that teams up new directors from under-represented communities with more established professionals.

The Academy also offers two additional grant programs—one aimed at funding film festivals, and another that helps individual screenwriters. The Festivals Program, now in its third year, gave out $240,000 to festivals such as Telluride and Seattle, as well as to the Black Maria traveling festival. Nicholl Fellowships provide five screenwriters per year with grants of $25,000 each.

So how does your organization get your hands on some of these funds? "The first thing you have to do is apply," says Beal. "We're not going to come looking for you if you don't apply." The application process is short and simple, but first you have to write in and ask for a grant application (Academy Foundation, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972; 310-247-3000). The decision process is handled by a committee of writers, filmmakers and industry professionals.

Basically, college film programs and any cause that supports helping underrepresented groups gain access to the film world stand a good chance. But there are less conventional projects out there, as well, that have gotten funding. California Institute of the Arts received $15,000 this year, for example, for the preservation of a Satyajit Ray workbook. Could your screenwriting guild or filmmaker's workshop be next? The envelope, please . . . .

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor at The Independent.



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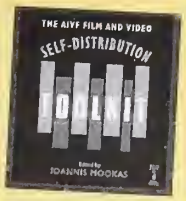
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3 The Association works, through the combined efforts o the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5 The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

A Tweety Bird in the Hand

Films Stream to PDAs

By Jennifer Uscher

The Internet is proving to be a popular distribution channel for short films, despite the fact that bandwidth limitations still prevent online access to full-screen, full resolution video. But viewers frustrated with watching tiny images in miniature windows may be mystified to learn that the latest form of film distribution requires even smaller screens and shorter films. Two U.S. start-ups have developed the technology to stream and download short films to palm-sized Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), cell phones, Pocket PCs, and other handheld portable devices, allowing viewers to enjoy short films and animations literally anywhere, any time, unencumbered by cables—though it may be a while before the image quality is ready for primetime.

Last spring, ActiveSky of Redwood City, California, released its downloadable Media Player software, which supports PDAs running Microsoft's PocketPC platform, as well as Windows CE and Palm units. Using the media player software, available for free on ActiveSky's web site [www.activesky.com], short films and animations can be downloaded for free from several sites, including AtomFilms.com, Eveo.com, and CinemaElectric.com.

Users report that the video quality is surprisingly good, with little image distortion or skipping, but that the frame rate is quite low (8 to 10 frames per second, compared to 30 frames per second for full motion video, and 12-15 for Quicktime movies on the web).

Scott Marquardt, CEO of ActiveSky, says that at least 20,000 players have been downloaded for the Pocket PC/Windows CE so far, and that the number of downloads for the Palm OS are catching up quickly.

Filmmakers who are interested in having their short films encoded so that they can be played on PDAs using ActiveSky software can hire Loudeye.com, the company that currently handles the encoding for most of ActiveSky's content partners.



What's up dotcom? Looney Toons & other shorts will stream to Casio's handheld devices early next year.

But ActiveSky plans eventually to give consumers the capability to make their own content to "show and share." "We anticipate making the encoding technology more easily available [via the web] since we have had an explosion of interest in it," Marquardt says.

ActiveSky's closest competitor is PacketVideo of San Diego, California, which specializes in delivering streaming media to wireless devices. In June PacketVideo [www.packetvideo.com] announced that it had teamed with over 35 media companies for a trial delivery of full-motion color video to cell phones and other wireless devices. Their proprietary software enables the encoding, decoding, and transmission of video in the MPEG-4 file format.

Warner Brothers is working with PacketVideo to stream 30-60 second cartoons featuring Looney Toons characters to PDAs, such as the Casio Cassiopeia E-115 and the Compaq iPaq, in early 2001. When streamed to wireless devices, animation requires less bandwidth than live action video, though clips must still be a minute or less due to the constraints of U.S. cellular phone networks.

Reaction to this new form of film distribution is still cautiously optimistic. Nora Barry, creator of TheBitScreen.com, one of the longest-running short-film web sites, feels the technology has great potential for filmmakers, but that there are currently too many technical limitations. Nonetheless, "I think we're going to be streaming films on cell phones before true broadband is developed," she says.

Aaron Koenig, co-founder of the German digital film portal Bitfilm.de, says that before his company considers streaming films to handheld devices, they're waiting for the debut of UMTS (the Universal Mobile Telecommunications System) which will allow wireless transmission at speeds more than 200 times faster than current networks allow. "UMTS will take off in Europe earlier than the U.S.," he says, "but it's still got a long way to go."

In the U.S., there are a number of hurdles to overcome before film viewing on wireless devices reaches a mass audience: a cell phone capable of playing color video has yet to be released here, and the marketplace for wireless is fragmented into disparate wireless network technologies. U.S. consumers are just beginning to use cell phones to access the web, let alone explore more advanced multimedia applications like video. The Japanese and Europeans are ahead of us in this regard, and many are already using their cell phones to play games, pay bills, and send email.

Fiona Deans, Business Affairs Director for AtomFilms, is currently exploring partnerships with wireless companies around the world, and believes that "this is an area where Asia and Europe will lead the U.S."

But even when the technology becomes more widely available, the limitations of slow data transfer speeds and monochromatic 1x1 inch screens are likely to guarantee a limited audience for wireless streaming video.

Jennifer Uscher [jbu3@columbia.edu] is a graduate student in the nonfiction writing program at Columbia University.

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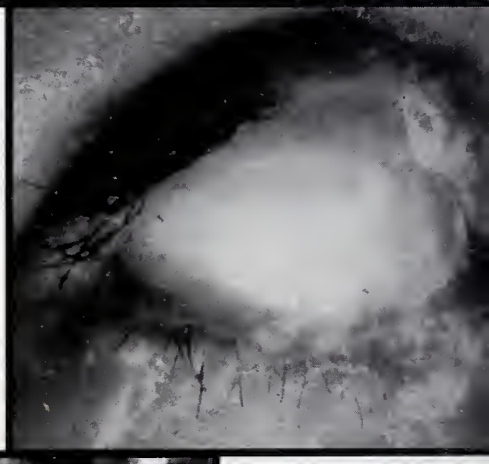
BY ERNEST LARSEN

THE 46TH OBERHAUSEN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL [www.kurzfilmtage.de], held May 4-9, was easily the best-organized and the most compelling festival I've attended in years. The international competition is tough—with an all-time high of 2,662 entries, just 68 films and videos from 33 countries were selected (10 from the U.S.). The English-speaking festival organizers and numerous staff are friendly and treat participants so well that you quickly realize how fully they must believe in the value of film/video culture. A young volunteer driver waiting at the Düsseldorf airport whisked me and my videomaking partner to the four-star Hotel Astron in Oberhausen, where we were put up for the duration of the festival. We were provided with a fistful of food vouchers usable at half-a-dozen nearby restaurants and given free tickets to all screenings. Though the small solidly middle-class city of Oberhausen apparently lacks many other attractions, the festival itself keeps you pretty riveted.

Creature comforts aside, opportunities to meet and talk to other makers and even distributors abounded in the cafés just outside the three-screen Filmpalast, which were lively till late each night. The skillful team of curators for the competition also organized individual programs with considerable care, trying, it seemed, less for thematic consistency than for following some metaphorical thread among otherwise disparate work. For example, the program in which our video *41 Shots* played was called "Boundary Lines," uniting six pieces (three of which, in the end, won prizes) that would otherwise seem to have little in common. But the notion of crossing a boundary did evoke a nearly subterranean element in which the pieces "spoke" to each other. Other suggestive program titles included "Settled Circumstances," "Conspiracies," and "Verbal Spaces." Each of the 10 competition programs were followed by discussions in an adjacent room, led by the curators. Though not as well-attended as they should have been—the screenings themselves always drew large audiences—these high-level discussions teased out questions and contradictions raised by the challenging films and videos. All film/video showings, discussions, lectures, and performances were simultaneously translated into both German and English, with portable headphones available for free.

In addition to the regular festival sections—international and German competitions, a children's film competition suitably judged by children, an Internet cafe, and a market with more than 3,500 productions, 12 viewing booths, and a phone-book size catalogue—there were a number of special programs. These included treasures from the estate of Orson Welles that featured his British television work, some trailers, and other oddities; plus a presentation of San Francisco filmmaker Craig Baldwin's shorter pieces, as well as a reliably raffish program he curated himself. Christian Holler curated "Pop Unlimited," with choices that ranged from music videos by Spike Jonze, Jem Cohen, and Mike Mills to Leslie Thornton's recent *Old Worldy* and Dara Birnbaum video-art classics. These programs were a spirited







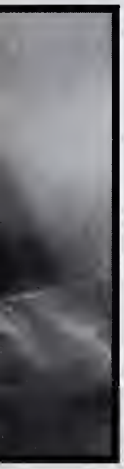
The kids are alright? From Mike Mills' *The Architecture of Reassurance.*

The eyes have it: Mark Sikora's *Prowler.*

Fast food in Masanori Tominaga's *Dolmen.*

attempt to remap the relations of various avant-gardes to mainstream culture, exploring what Holler calls "the contemporary politicization of pop," primarily through "image-transfer" (appropriation) and a correlated movement in music and film from a "politics of representation to a politics of experience."

The politics of another kind of displacement were invoked in the 12-part program curated by Marina Grzinic, "Sex, Rock 'n' Roll and History: (Video) Films from Eastern Europe 1950-2000." The amazingly energetic Grzinic has compiled a subversive alternative history of Eastern Europe which situates film and, even more especially, video as the primary tools in the contemporary media rewriting of Eastern Europe which produced, as she says, "the conscious visual reconfiguration of an 'original' Socialist alternative cultural structure." This well-attended series, which also involved performances, lectures, and demonstrations, was replete with such an extraordinary variety of quirky sophisticated films and videos that it's difficult to single out a few. Aleksandr Sokurov's extremely sober and sobering *Soviet Elegy* (1989) ends with an unflinching long take of Yeltsin sitting alone at a table, holding his head in his hands. The longer he sits there, the more you feel the weight of historical change, an impressive validation of Sokurov's nerve in keeping the camera's eye steady on this then-new leader of Russia. In his *Intervista* (1998) 20-year-old Anri Sala discovers old silent footage of his mother as a Communist youth leader standing next to the now-notorious, then-revered leader of Romania, Nicolae Ceaucescu, and gently urges her to confront herself. The film becomes an impassioned exploration of the relation of youthful ideals to the often grotesque betrayals of history. Srdjan Vuletic's bitter *I Burnt Legs* (1993) really is about what its title avows, and Karpo Godina's deadpan portrait of peasant intransigence, *The Healthy People for Fun* (1971) is both uproarious and chilling at the same time. Grzinic should be invited to the U.S. to tour a version of these programs.



The international jury, composed of filmmakers, curators, and critics Catherine David (France), Kodwo Eshun (U.K.), Olia Lialina (Russia), Jennifer Reeder (U.S.), and Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania/France), tended to choose as prize winners intimate elliptical narratives, often featuring teenage characters. Among these were films from Austria (Kathrin Resetarits, *Strangers*), Australia (Cate Shortland, *Flowergirl*), and Portugal (Miguel Gomes, *Meanwhile*). Other winners included the situationist-inspired *La Derive* (Phillippe Welsh, France), and *The Architecture of Reassurance* (Mike Mills, U.S.), a reworking of *Alice in Wonderland* in sunlit Southern California suburbia. Other jury awards went to a formal documentary about the insecurity of labor, *Talking Work* (Sandrine Dryers, Belgium); to *Home* (Morag McKinnon, U.K.), about a day in the life of a housing officer; to *Regression* (John Smith, U.K.), a funny self-reflexive video portrait of the artist; to *Summertime* (Anna Luif, Switzerland), another coming-of-age narrative; to the fanatically stylized three-minute kitsch extravaganza, *Love Is All* (Oliver Harrison, U.K.), in which 1940s film star Deanna Durbin sings the title song. Amid such sterling production values, it was a little startling to everyone, I think, that our no-budget *41 Shots* (Sherry Millner & myself), a meditation on the police murder of Amidou Diallo, also won an award.

Even so, the undoubted "high" point of the festival came at a post-midnight performance by Balint Szombathy, which was billed as an "homage to the last video-work." Szombathy sat onstage at a table in front of a projected slide-show of his favorite video/performance works, saluting each slide with volunteers from the audience, each downing one shot of Absolut along with Szombathy. He must have consumed 50 shots of vodka in a single sitting, an astounding demonstration of intestinal fortitude, topped by a final act of artistic vandalism. He then stood up—it amazed everyone that he could indeed stand up—smashed a television picture tube with a formidable hammer and vomited into the video void he'd just created. He received wild and sustained applause, whereupon we all adjourned to the lobby and drank yet more vodka.

Ernest Larsen is a media critic and videomaker.

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Art...Despite Everything

The Sarajevo Film Festival

BY PATRICIA THOMSON



WORLD WAR I STARTED HERE: The bridge where Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Serb nationalist Black Hand organization, shot Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in June 1914, setting off the Great War.

It's Late Summer in Sarajevo and the blackberries alongside the mountain road are deep glistening purple and ready to pick. But no one dares go near them, not with the small red signs every few hundred yards warning of land mines. Four UN peacekeepers were killed earlier in the week defusing some of these deadly calling cards left behind after the four-year siege of Sarajevo—the longest in modern history.

The war has effectively been over for five years, ever since the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in 1995, and, predictably, world attention has wandered on to other crises—Kosovo, East Timor, the Middle East. But while Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has been bumped from the front pages, it is still a wounded nation, struggling to overcome the lingering effects of war. Unemployment in the capital city of Sarajevo stands at 70 percent. Housing is either in ruins or in dispute. Ethnic divisions have hardened—a mindshift that's evident in countless details, like the fact that no one there refers to the "Serbo-Croatian" language anymore. It's "Serbian" or "Bosnian" or "Croatian," depending on whom you talk to.

But healing is taking place. It's apparent in the newly plastered facades and the pervasive dust of reconstruction. It's in the reopening of shops and the return of outdoor cafés and casual evening promenades in the city center. And it's in cultural events like the Sarajevo International Film Festival, which is trying to rebuild the country's filmmaking infrastructure at the same time as it's offering local residents a pleasant night out on the town.

THE FILM FESTIVAL GREW OUT OF A WARtime effort centered at the Obala Art Center, which adopted a stance of "Art...Despite Everything." The possibility of live theater was effectively stopped by the siege, so theater director Mirsad Purivatra redirected his focus and opened a small 100-seat cinema, the War Cinema Appolo, which used video projection to exhibit the miscellaneous tapes they had on hand.

"One of the first who came to Sarajevo was Phil Robinson, who directed *Field of Dreams*," recalls Purivatra over an espresso in Obala's outdoor café, which now serves as the meeting place for film festival participants. "He came as a journalist in '92 or '93—in the beginning of the war. When he saw our cinema, he sent thousands of tapes through American soldiers."

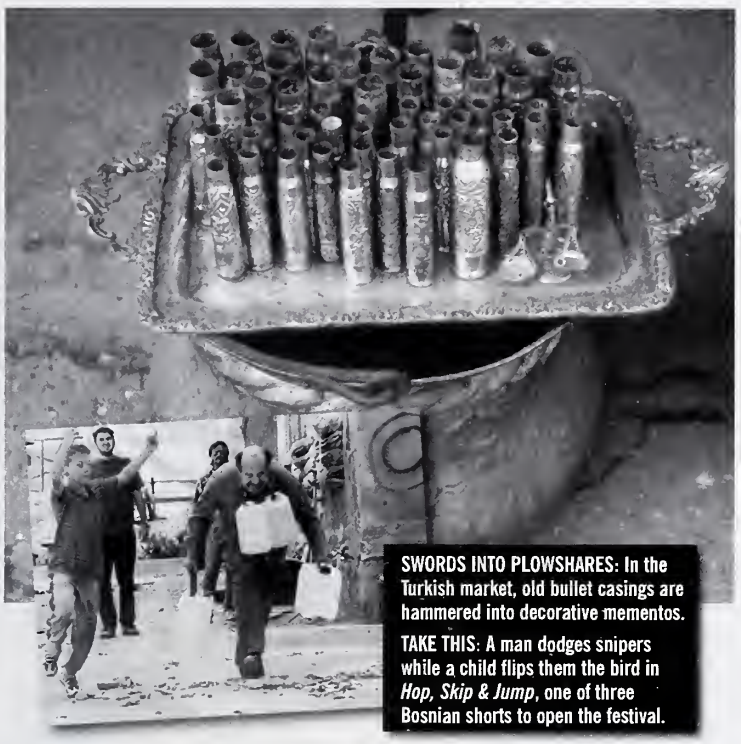
The cinema took off. As Purivatra

proudly admits, "We did quite a good job, in spite of the shelling. People started to go to the cinema. It was sold out all the time." The videos were a mix of arthouse and commercial films, and produced a number of local hits, such as *Basic Instinct*, which packed the theater for 20 days straight. "But it's strange; one of our guys who saw the film was more impressed by the luxury and food than by Sharon Stone. That was a time when it was better to see light and food than a naked actress," Purivatra laughs, then continues: "Some journalists reported about the War Cinema, and after that the Locarno and Edinburgh Film Festivals, French Film Institute, and Swiss Pro Helvetie sent messages through journalists and asked how to come." In the winter of '94/95, people and programs from these European film organizations started to arrive, then later in 1995 the first Sarajevo Film Festival was officially launched by Purivatra and Izeta Gradjevic with 37 films from 15 countries and over a dozen international guests.

"Everyone was happy to be here, but very afraid also," says Purivatra. Small surprise, given the sandbags stacked in front of the theater's entrance and other pointed reminders of a state of siege. "Those days it was relatively calm, but no one knew; it was possible to be bombed. During the war, it was strange; maybe you'd have seven days with no bombing, and the next, one bomb would kill 20 people. Always it was a big risk."

In the five years since, Sarajevo has been helped enormously by friends in foreign places. You see signs of it walking through the city streets: the shiny yellow fleet of buses, a gift from the Japanese; the burnt National Library being reconstructed thanks to the Austrians, who built it in the first place during their reign last century; the art center, orphans' home, and various housing developments being renovated by foreign governments, each prominently credited on the ubiquitous construction signs.

The same thing has occurred within the film community. With the Sarajevo Film Festival acting as conduit, the Göteborg Film Festival contributed a precious 16mm camera and editing table, and this year announced a much-needed production fund for BiH filmmakers, which will award $10,000 to the winner. A Swiss arthouse provided projectors for the festival, and more recently the Rotterdam Film Festival with the Hivos Foundation gave mobile projection equipment to take films into schools around the country. Now the British Council is in discussions with Purivatra about holding one of their "Know How" training seminars in Sarajevo, which brings in film professionals to educate local filmmakers on ways to produce and pitch work for the international market.



SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES: In the Turkish market, old bullet casings are hammered into decorative mementos.

TAKE THIS: A man dodges snipers while a child flips them the bird in *Hop, Skip & Jump*, one of three Bosnian shorts to open the festival.

Now that the festival's raison d'etre is no longer pure psychic survival, Purivatra is trying to turn it into a regional meeting ground for filmmakers and industry players from the former Yugoslavia. It's a tall order, for this kind of regional cooperation runs counter to a competing impulse towards fractionalization that's splintering the region's people and resources. That has affected such things as the television industry; after the Dayton Accord gave Serbs control of 49% of BiH's territory and a Muslim-Croat Federation 51%, the national television network has split into two stations. Network journalists now barely make a living wage, and BiH's TV production has dwindled to a trickle.

Resources must be pooled to survive, in Purivatra's view. In order to coax that along, the festival has undertaken several initiatives. This year a small Television Festival accompanied the theatrical features. In addition to tapes of dramatic series and programs, the two-day event brought in reps from TV stations in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Side by side, former rivals sat during a morning roundtable discussion, sharing laments of plummeting production. One BiH editor made a plea for regional cooperation to help protect local culture from being pushed off the airwaves by inexpensive American series. "We need a Program Bank to deposit our programs which can be made free for broadcast amongst ourselves"—a low-maintenance idea that found favor among some. No one knows yet what might come out of this sidebar event, but Purivatra is hoping it might grow into something along the lines of Rotterdam's CineMart—where commissioning editors and development people meet with regional filmmakers in order to initiate cofinancing and coproduction deals. Just getting these folks together in one room was the first incremental step in that direction.

Another program of quite a different order also brings Serbs, Bosnians, and Croatians together for the sake of film, and that's the massively popular Children's Program. Seven Disney films, from *Toy Story* to *Lady and the Tramp* to *Air Bud*, were seen free of charge by 3,000 ecstatically screaming children and their parents. All seemed unfazed by the subtitles, with the younger ones content to watch Disney-style mischief and mayhem erupt on the screen. But more significantly, this was the first year that the festival bused in

kids from all over BiH, including the Serbian territory, Republika Srpska, and no disturbance was created by the fact that all were squeezed together on the bleacher seats. "Six or even two years ago, we wouldn't have imagined kids from Republika Srpska here in Sarajevo," says Elma Hadziredzepovic, one of five film students at the local arts academy and curator of the festival's Bosnian sidebar. "It's hard to send your kids to a place where you think the enemies are. But we're getting over that problem. If this year there are one hundred to two hundred children [bused in] from Banjaluka, I think next year they'll come by themselves. And the year after, we'll work together on a film—because we do not live separately."

UNDER A BALMY NIGHT SKY, 2,500 FILMGOers in the Open Air cinema watch a clip from *Fargo*: Steve Buscemi plays a kidnapper who is going completely ballistic when the wrong man shows up with the ransom money, then he gets shot in the jaw. Afterwards, the actor/director, the subject of the festival's first Tribute program, trots on stage to wild applause and graciously thanks the festival and audience. He then turns to his nine-year-old son seated below (who had never before seen any of his father's more violent and foul-mouthed films), sternly shakes his finger and says, "Don't use this language at home!"

Later in the week, we chat outside a children's workshop being conducted by his wife, choreographer and filmmaker Jo Andres. The couple have a long relationship with the festival organizers, whom Andres first met at a theater festival in Spain in 1989, then stayed in touch with throughout the war. Several years ago Andres created an emotionally powerful short film about domestic life under the siege, *Black Kites*, based on the diaries of one of these theater friends. She was surprised to learn that the arts center we're now in was in fact the very building whose basement her friend hid in during those dark, dangerous years.

Buscemi says, "It's extra meaningful for us to be here because they're such good friends of ours and we're really trying to support what they're trying to do. I really made a point that, no matter what I was doing, I would be here."

In addition to his regular festival duties (film introductions, a televised discussion with Panorama curator Howard Feinstein, a party in his honor at the U.S. Ambassador's home), Buscemi agreed to do a PSA about land mines, along with Willem Defoe, star of Buscemi's latest directorial outing, the prison drama *Animal Factory*. As with many foreign guests, the country's nightmare period has registered deeply with Buscemi.



Mixed in with Austro-Hungarian architecture are Turkish markets and many mosques.

An apartment complex destroyed by Serbian shells.

Our tour guide: Retired General Jovan Divjak shows festival guests the former front lines.

"It's frightening to think how close everything was," he says. "The city's layout sort of reminds me of L.A.—if you can imagine West L.A. being attacked by people in the hills. It's that close. And it's a small city. I just can't imagine how people lived that way for four years—without electricity, without access to water."

By now, the festival has figured out that international guests who make their way to Bosnia and Herzegovina want to see more than just films and Absolut concoctions. So instead of offering a heavy party schedule, the festival organizes a number of tours. There's a visit to the former front lines on the mountains overlooking the city, led by a no-nonsense retired General, Jovan Divjak, who served as Deputy of the High Commander of the BiH Army during the siege. There's lunch at a trout farm that was once a favorite haunt of Communist capos before the breakup of Yugoslavia. And there's a daylong excursion to Mostar, once "the pearl of Bosnia" and now a divided and scarred city, and the nearby Blagaj, where a meditation temple for dervishes is nestled under a towering cliff from which springs an icy-cold crystalline stream.

As we gawk at the splendor and devastation of BiH, Sarajevans in turn get to stare at the celebrities in town—Buscemi, Defoe, Mike Leigh, and Bono, among others. And residents get a rare opportunity to watch 115 selections of contemporary world cinema. Once boasting 142 theaters, BiH now has just 17 and virtually no international distributors doing business there. So this is probably residents' one-and-only chance to see recent releases like *American Beauty*, *Jesus' Son*, *Topsy Turvy*, and *La Ciudad*, as well as films now on the festival circuit, like Wong Kar Wai's *In the Mood for Love*, Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark*, and Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream*. No less important, the festival offers a Regional Program with features from Poland, Finland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia, and Croatia.

Three years ago, the festival added another critical component: the Bosna Program. Begun when Ademir Kenovic's *The Perfect Circle* was the first feature to emerge from the wreckage, this sidebar has since showcased mainly shorts and student work, reflecting the tough reality of pro-

duction in BiH. So, too, does the Insert Program, a new section this year that shows short works from BiH shot on video.

Admittedly, a number of these productions lose something in the translation, like Selimir Sokolovic's *The Secret of the Mobile Phone*. A simple scenario that was edited using two VHS decks, this video shows a young slacker with his cell phone on a street corner trying with all his might to persuade a female friend to come outside. She blows him off—'her hair is wet,' but he persists, trying the same lines again and again—or so the subtitles would make it seem. However, the Bosnian audience was in stitches listening to his ineffectual monologue, and a local jury awarded it the Kodak Prize, so it seems this character's rap just didn't translate.

Many other BiH works needed no translation, however, like the three shorts on opening night, all of which dealt with the recent war. *The Abyss*, for instance, was virtually a silent movie, showing the meticulous unearthing of massacred bodies in a mass grave and their identification by wailing relatives, who often have nothing more to go on than the pattern of a plaid jacket. The 26-year-old filmmaker, Adis Bakrac, got his start at age 16 as a cameraman during the war for a local TV station. A recent graduate from Sarajevo's film school, he's anxious to move on to a dramatic feature he's written, one that's "about my generation after the war: what's their future?"

When I ask him what he imagines his own future to be, Bakrac states, "I'm here, even though it's hard to freelance and there are no foundations to help." Unlike many of his peers, he intends to stay in Sarajevo and develop projects and international coproductions through INK, a five-person film and video production group he cofounded. But when our interview ends, Bakrac appears less resolute. "What do you think I should do?," he asks.

I later pose the question to Purivatra, who must have constant conversations with local artists about staying versus going. "It's a personal question," he responds. "On one side, I know that many of them would be lost outside. I know that in America it's not easy for Americans to get a chance to shoot a film, so imagine the difficulties of a Bosnian. I decided to stay here, and sometimes I'm depressed, but sometimes I'm very happy that I stayed."

The Open Air Cinema, where 2,500 Bosnians gathered nightly to watch *American Beauty* and other commercial hits.



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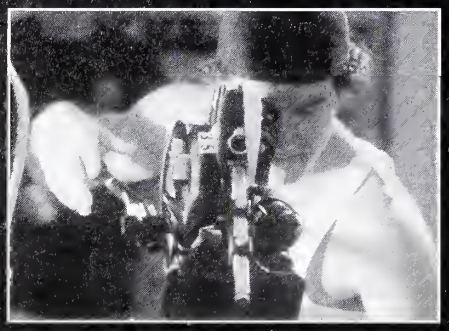
Others are glad he stayed, too, given the role that the Sarajevo Film Festival has played in the city's recovery. As Buscemi observes, "One of the tragedies of the conflict is that a lot of good people left—smart young people, who haven't come back. For those who have stayed, it's been really hard. You can't go through something like that and it's over just because it's over. So there's a struggle to keep positive. One of the ways to do that is the film festival; it's a great idea. By inviting other people to come in, hopefully it gives them a sense of pride that people are interested." With its attendance climbing every year, it's clear that people are interested. And with Purivatra's plans for a regional meeting ground, it's possible the Sarajevo Film Festival just might turn into the pearl of southeast Europe.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

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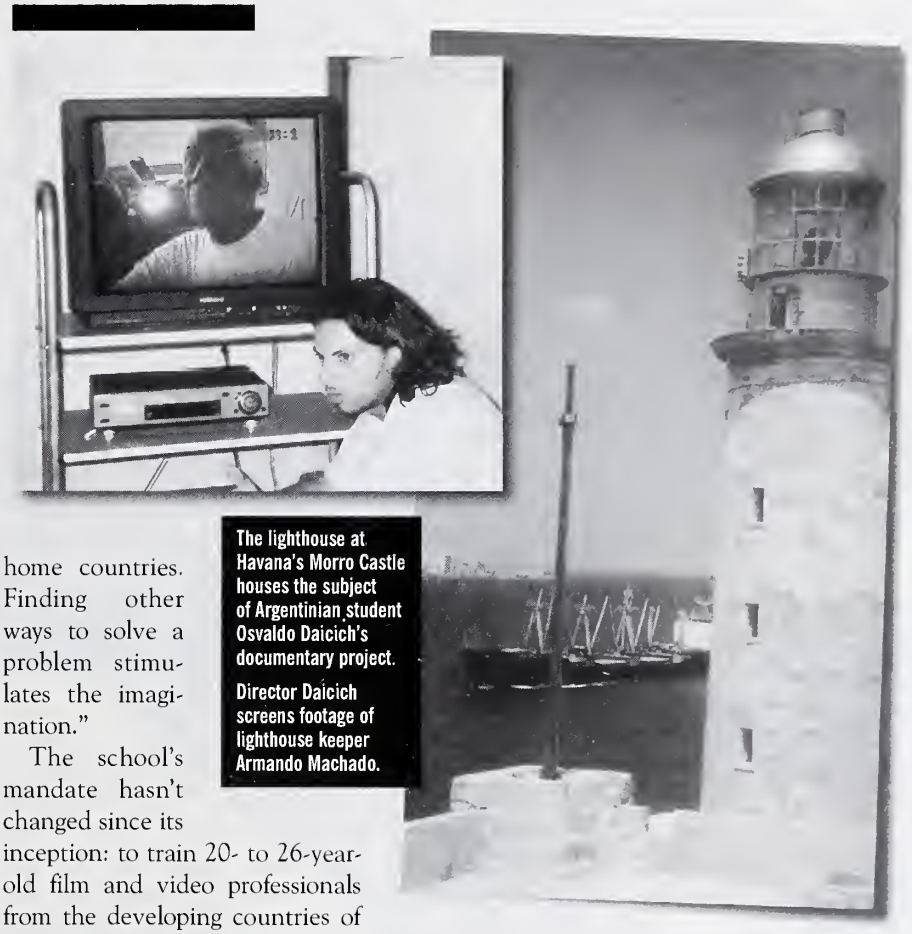
Cuba's International Film and TV School Thrives Against the Odds.

BY LIBBY BASSETT

AKIKO MAJIMA AND HER crew were dumbfounded. Last May, just one week before beginning production on the documentary that was to serve as their first-year final, they were denied access to their subject. Section heads at Cuba's International Film and TV School had enthusiastically approved the idea: the story of a once-luxury building in Havana that had so disintegrated it could be seen as a metaphor for recent Cuban history. What they didn't know was that the daily Elián Gonzalez program was being televised from that building, and Fidel Castro was to appear on the show, though no one knew exactly when. Until Fidel had come and gone, state security told the student film crew, the building was off-limits.

It was hard for Majima to protest, not because of the political situation but because her Spanish was limited. Although Spanish is a prerequisite for acceptance at Cuba's international film school, somehow Majima arrived from Japan with none. With the blessing of school administrators, her Brazilian producer and Colombian writer embarked on an intensive in-person and telephone lobbying effort. It got nowhere. And so Majima and her crew had to find and research a new subject for their 13-minute documentary in just one week.

And so it goes at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television (EICTV), where students and teachers have had to make a virtue out of necessity. "Sometimes the working conditions are difficult, but this is also a present," says visiting professor Bruno Flament, a French cinematographer. "We are not so dependent on technology here as in our home countries. Finding other ways to solve a problem stimulates the imagination."



The lighthouse at Havana's Morro Castle houses the subject of Argentinian student Osvaldo Daicich's documentary project.

Director Daicich screens footage of lighthouse keeper Armando Machado.

PHOTOS COURTESY EICTV

The school's mandate hasn't changed since its inception: to train 20- to 26-year-old film and video professionals from the developing countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Since its founding in 1986, 83 percent of the school's 308 graduates have come from Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2000, most of its 76 undergraduates were from the region, along with 13 from Europe, two from Japan, and one from Canada. The school's "professors" are film and video professionals from more than 40 countries who are invited to Cuba, generally for two weeks, to share their experiences and expertise. The staff coordinators of each specialty taught—production, direction, screenwriting, cinematography, editing, and sound—often select visiting teachers from their own professional networks. But there is another source.

The annual Havana International Film Festival has supplied some outstanding guest lecturers, including Costa Gavras, Robert Redford, Ettore Scola, Danny Glover, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Terry Gilliam, Peter Greenaway, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Helen Mirren, Wole Soyinka, Frances McDormand, and the Coen brothers. Francis Ford Coppola not only lectured at the school twice, he even cooked for everyone both times.

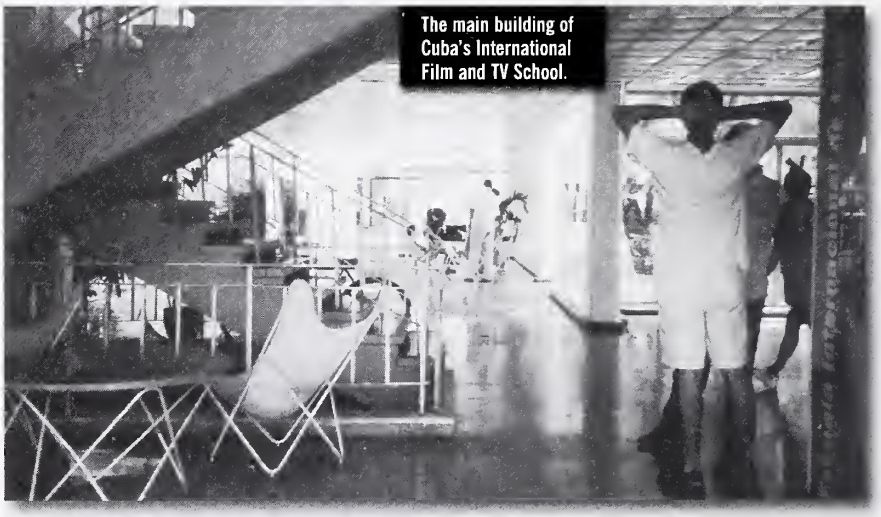
"The originality and the strength of this school is that its teachers come from many places and give their all," explains Flament, "so the students get much more than if they had the same teacher year round. This is very important."

In 1993, just seven years after its founding, EICTV won the prestigious Rossellini Award at the Cannes Film Festival—a first for any film school—for its work in developing the audiovisual industry (previous winners have included England's Channel Four and Martin Scorsese). And over the past decade, school graduates have won scores of awards at festivals. Today, students and staff boast that Cuba's film

school is considered one of the best in the world.

ITS LATIN AMERICAN FOUNDERS, LED BY Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel García Marquez, had big dreams. The first 50 students, all from developing countries, entered in 1987 on full scholarships. The idea was to quintuple that number within a few years and make the school Latin America's premier film and television production center, like Italy's Cinecittá.

Four years later the Soviet Union disintegrated and so did its support of the Cuban economy. The lean years of the "special period" began. While the school has always had outside support—from sponsors, arts councils, and foundations—the Cuban government provided land and buildings, food, transportation, and staff wages in local currency. Food became scarce throughout Cuba, as did fuel for transport and electricity. Even though EICTV grows much of its own produce and has its own generator, it still had to tighten its belt. Equipment was wearing out, and there was no money to buy new. Administrators were forced to cut the number of students they could accept, down from 50 to between 20 and 25 a year. By 1996, as tourist dollars began to filter into the Cuban economy, the decision was made to charge tuition—in U.S. dollars.


The main building of Cuba's International Film and TV School.

Now students at the two-year school pay $5,000 for the first year and $7,000 for the second, a fee that covers only 45 percent of what it costs to teach, equip, feed, and house them. After graduation, they are eligible for post-graduate workshops at the school and can apply to continue their professional development at cooperating institutions in Australia, Europe, and the U.S. (at Sundance).

After trying each specialty in their first year, the students form themselves into crews, each comprising a producer, director, screenwriter, cinematographer, soundperson, and editor, to make seven documentaries. The students are lucky in that all video and film stock is supplied by one of EICTV's sponsoring partners, Fujifilm. Another sponsor, Canal+ España, has bought two-time broadcast rights to everything produced at the school, which helps pay for equipment.

Another source of funding is the school's on-going series of professional workshops on such subjects as directing actors, casting, telenovela writing, making documentaries, special effects, community video, makeup, art direction, and underwater photography. Over the years, the workshops have attracted more than 2,000 film and TV professionals worldwide. This year, 33 workshops ranging from two to 12 weeks were scheduled. Limited to between 12 and 20 students, they cost anywhere from U.S. $1,000 to $2,400, including room and board.

The overall annual budget, according to EICTV director Alberto García Ferrer, is more than $1 million a year. By American standards, this is not much for a school that in 2000 was responsible for 76 undergraduates, some 600 participants in professional workshops, dozens of visiting teachers, and 130 staff members, from administrators to drivers, farmers, and medical personnel. But in Cuba, it represents a sizable investment; the average monthly wage is $10, and a doctor earns $30 a month.

FOR SOME CUBANS, WORK NOT ONLY IS A necessity, it is life itself. Osvaldo Daicich, a first-year film student from Argentina, discovered this when he visited Havana's Morro Castle three years ago as a tourist. He struck up a conversation with lighthouse keeper Armando Machado, who, he says, "told me he'd been working there 66 years. I told myself, if I could develop a good approach to this, I could make a documentary." Three years later, EICTV gave him the chance, and he and his crew began collecting archival material and shooting preliminary footage.

His Cuban writer-researcher, Serguei Svoboda Verdaguer, says, "The old man is 87 now and has witnessed historic events in a place that's been a fortress, military headquarters, prison, navy observation post, and tourist site." On a scouting trip to El Morro he explained the subtext of their documentary to his U.S.-based teacher, Robert Richter: "The isolation that the old man lives in, completely devoted to his work, is a metaphor for the isolation of Cuba."

Patrik Axen, 24, a second-year student from Sweden, first heard of the school while working in Spain in 1996. The following year he was in Beijing studying Chinese and picked up an application during a May Day party at the Cuban Embassy. He submitted it in 1998 and was soon accepted into the class of 2000.

"I'd met former students who told me terrific things about this school in the midst of a rainforest, so isolated they made documentaries about lampposts," Axen says, stretching the truth only slightly. The school is in a tropical pastoral setting about 25 miles from Havana. Accommodations are simple but adequate. Undergraduates live in the airy, glass-walled main building that includes all classrooms, editing facilities, an auditorium, dining room, snack bar, computer room, clinic, dollar shop, and administrative offices. Two nearby apartment buildings house visiting teachers, foreign staff, and workshop participants. Austere, four-story white rectangles punctuated by louvered windows overlook the school's 14-hectare farm on one side and a vista of

palm trees, flowers, fields, and cows in front.

Cows play a big part in Cuban—and school—life. This year they were the subject of a first-year documentary: in Cuba you can feed a cow and milk it, but you cannot kill it since cows belong to the state; this leads to cows "accidentally" getting hit by trucks or trains. As their second-year final—a 10-minute 35mm film—Axen and his crew were shooting a comedy about a woman whose car crashes into a cow.

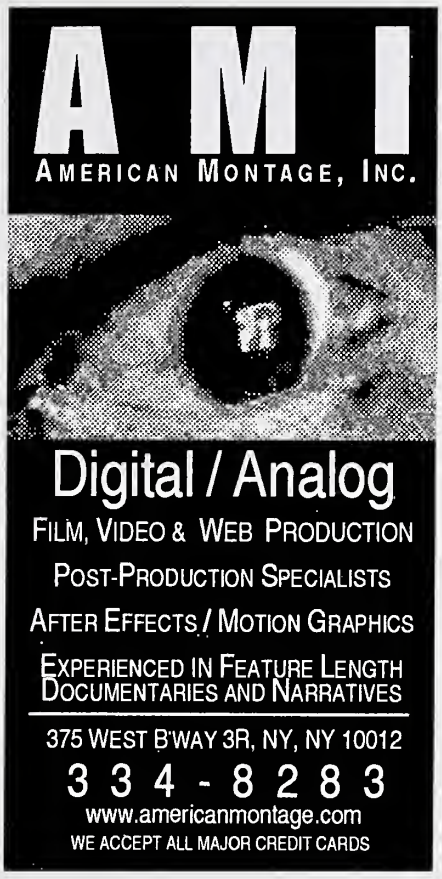
While first-year documentary students work with themselves in crews of six, second-year film crews are much bigger, Axen says, up to 45 people, including actors, electricians, grips, wardrobe, makeup, guards, caterers and transport, mostly supplied by ICAIC, the Cuban Film Institute, which co-founded the school.

"Being in Cuba has its good points and bad points," Axen remarked a few weeks before graduating and returning to Sweden. "I don't think the school is as experimental as it should be. However, the academic quality is good because of the quality and quantity of the professors. In our second-year production course, we had 25 teachers, all top of the line. Since the school is so isolated, the teachers stay here, and we have a chance to speak with them. Our education here is 50 percent what we learn in class and 50 percent what we learn outside from the teachers and students from 30 different countries."

And what about Majima's film after her project was killed at the 11th hour? Two months later, her Colombian writer-researcher, Diego León Ruiz Arboleda, e-mailed to say, "As you'll recall, we had to change the subject in the last minute . . . So we made *Always Circus*, about the circus people in Havana. I confess to you, for this work we didn't have a lot of time to investigate and produce, but it's the best of the seven documentaries."

For further information on EICTV, contact Pedro Zurita, Executive Director, Videoteca del Sur, 84 E. 3rd St., Ste 5A, New York, NY 10003; (212) 674-5405; fax: (212) 613-0464; videlsur96@aol.com, or contact the school directly: eictv@eictv.org.cu

Libby Bassett is a freelance writer, editor and designer. She is married to AIVF board member and documentary filmmaker Robert Richter.







Teutonic Treasure

The Film Foundation of North Rhine Westphalia

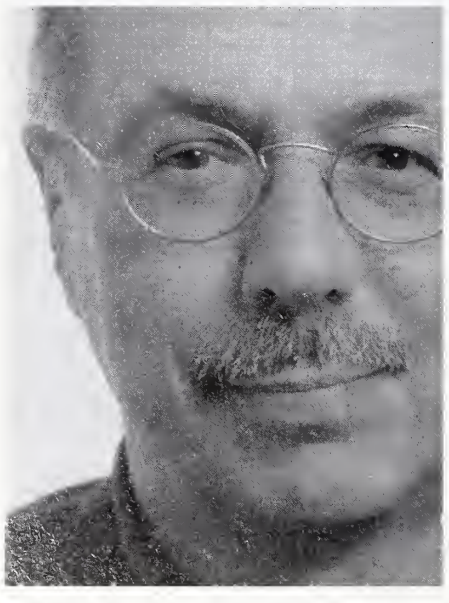
BY CLAUS MUELLER



MOST INDEPENDENTS HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS securing development and production funds in the United States. So the idea of looking for funding all they way over in Europe may seem far-fetched. Yet rapid changes in production and distribution technologies, instant access to information from funding sources, and the growth of international co-productions are creating new opportunities for foreign funding and partnerships.

At present, Germany is the most likely source of production funds. Not only is it Europe's dominant political and economic power and the world's second largest film and television market, but it also has an established network of film foundations. The most prominent and innovative of these is the Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW Film Foundation), which has become the second largest Euro-pean source of public production funds, surpassed only by French agencies. The second important source of funding is from German television stations for the production or co-production of programs for the Arte network. The German ARD and ZDF broadcasting networks provide half of the production for Arte, an upscale French-German television venture which by and large offers the best programs currently on the air in Europe. Lastly, there are several funding mechanisms organized by the European Union, but these are currently rather difficult for Americans to access, since in most cases applicants must be residents of a European Union nation.

This article provides an in-depth look at the NRW Film Foundation [www.filmstiftung.de]. In upcoming issues, we'll examine Arte and the European Union's Media and Eurimage programs.



Left: NRW's chief executive Dieter Kosslick, recently appointed artistic director of the Berlinale .

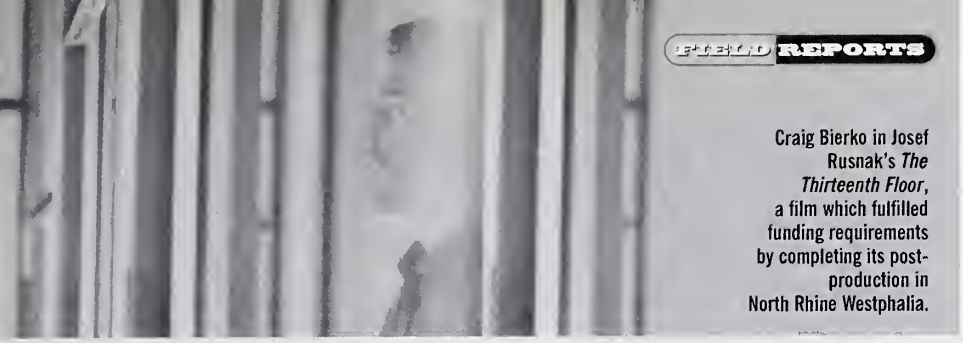
Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen

THE SCOPE AND INNOVATIONS OF THE NRW Film Foundation, as driven by its professional staff and charismatic chief executive Dieter Kosslick (who recently announced his departure to become artistic director of the Berlinale, the Berlin Film Festival), are unparalleled in Germany and other European countries. From 1991 through 1999, the NRW Film Foundation provided production support of DM 391 million ($186 million; all the following figures are based on an exchange rate of 1 DM = $0.4773), of which roughly $95 million was spent on 281 features, documentaries, and children's films and 79 television projects. In addition, about $20 million was allocated to the marketing and distribution of 150 films, the modernization of 154 cinemas, the development of 157 screenplays, and scholarship grants to authors of radio plays. Since its establishment nine years ago, the foundation has experienced an annual increase in its budget. It now has a project support budget of about $33 million. Principal partners and shareholders contributing funds to the NRW Film Foundation are the state of North Rhine Westphalia, the WDR (continental Europe's largest public television station), the ZDF, and two cooperating commercial broadcasters, ProSieben and Sat1.

On top of all this, the foundation recently undertook the organization of a major Film Kongress, which was held during the June 2000 Cologne Medien Forum and Conference and centered on international co-production. During the congress, the foundation announced yet another initiative: a co-operation treaty with the Dutch Film Foundation. This agreement, once implemented, permits United States partners of a Dutch-German co-production to spend a significant portion of the funds derived from the NRW Film Foundation in Holland and funds obtained from the Dutch foundation in NRW.

Also noteworthy is an Incentive Funding Program for the establishment of new production companies in NRW, which provides interest-free loans for the preproduction and development phase of innovative film and television projects. This should be of interest to U.S. producers who are serious about establishing long-term alliances with Germany. Though foreign producers can directly apply to the NRW Film Foundation (and those located in other German states), it is possible but rather difficult to receive funding unless there is a German co-producer who partners in the film venture. One alternative for the American filmmaker is to establish a registered company in the German regions whose film founda-

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ARTE



Craig Bierko in Josef Rusnak's *The Thirteenth Floor*, a film which fulfilled funding requirements by completing its post-production in North Rhine Westphalia.

The Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen has become the second largest European source of public production funds.

tion the American wants to access, which is most likely to be North Rhine Westphalia. This requires a capitalization of at least $25,000 and provides the legal status which will also be necessary to tap into other European Union funding sources.

There is no question that the success of the NRW Film Foundation is due to an effective balancing act between pragmatic economic and artistic considerations. As to the artistic side, recent price-winning features funded by the NRW Film Foundation include *Dancer in the Dark* (Lars von Trier), *Buena Vista Social Club* (Wim Wenders), *The Vulcano* (Ottokar Runze), *Run Lola Run* (Tom Tykwer), *Black Cat White Cat* (Emir Kusturica), and *The Death Game* (Heinrich Breloer), to name but a few.

The goal of the NRW Film Foundation is simple: "the creation of new jobs through great filmmaking," a goal that has been instrumental in shaping the foundation's funding policy. It is also reflected in their involvement in other projects, such as the establishment of training and production facilities—which have created in North Rhine Westphalia the most advanced media infrastructure in Europe—and the recent establishment of a film commission, which provides location and thematic scouting services for the region (there are, for instance, about 250 water castles in the state).

The funding formula is compelling in its simplicity and results in the so-called NRW effect. For each dollar received, the filmmaker has to spend $1.50 in North Rhine Westphalia. The funds can be used to shoot the film in NRW or just for postproduction, as was the case with *The Thirteenth Floor*. If the film is financially successful, the filmmaker has to repay the loan or get permission to apply the amount to his/her next NRW project. Cost benefit analysis shows the break-even point to be 150% of the original loan. At that point the benefits—such as new employment, services used, taxes paid, and trickle-down factors generated by spending that amount—exceed the costs of the loan. If more than 150% is recouped through production and related spending, a surplus is generated.

For the $150 million provided in interest-free loans from 1991-1999, $261 million was spent in North Rhine Westphalia. The number of projects funded has more than doubled—from 27 in 1991 to 57 in 1999—with international co-productions increasing steadily, as does the surplus from production and postproduction spending. Thus in 1999, $27 million was provided in loans to producers, who in turn spent $51 million in NRW. This reflects Kosslick's astute judgment, since the jury deciding on production support is guided by his recommendations.

Whereas some other funders and German producers are not too happy about U.S. independents competing for scarce funds, the NRW Film Foundation welcomes any viable U.S. project meeting its criteria and has funded numerous productions with U.S. participation. Filmmakers can produce the entire film in English, but must deposit a German version of the film, either subtitled or dubbed. Applicants do not have to be residents of North Rhine Westphalia or live in Germany. Criteria used by the foundation



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focus on German films from inside and outside the NRW region, films with the likelihood of commercial success in their theatrical release, films co-produced with international partners, films of special interest to North Rhine Westphalia, and, though not spelled out as a formal requirement, a German coproducer. Applicants must submit a completed script with the application and can apply for a loan up to half of the production costs. Chances of funding by the foundation are higher if some of the funding is already in place.

The scope and sophistication of projects backed by the film foundation evidence North Rhine Westphalia's state-of-the-art facilities (see sidebar). Constructed over the last decade, they include Europe's largest film and television studios and host many companies specializing in digital effects and animation. Among the numerous Americans working there is Oscar-winner Tim McGovern (special effects for *Total Recall*), now in charge of the NRW-based Digital Renaissance FSB production company. Thus all special effects, sound work, and digital postproduction work for *The Thirteenth Floor* were able to be carried out in NRW with NRW funding. Even effects as elaborate as the fake armies in *The Patriot* and the water logging of *The Perfect Storm* could be as readily generated in North Rhine Westphalia as in Hollywood.

As Anja Grafers, producer for Lars von Trier, puts it, "By now it is well known abroad that the production conditions [in North Rhine Westphalia] are excellent and that the maximum amount of financial support is provided." The openness towards U.S. independents is expressed in Kosslick's suggestion that they participate in the 2001 edition of the International Co-Production Market Cologne next June. Part of the NRW-organized Film Kongress, the market costs about $290 to attend. (For a project to be entered in the market, financial backing of 30% of the production costs has to be secured. See www.filmstiftung.de) This gathering of about 200 producers, directors, and key executives from the European film and television industries provides case studies of co-productions, seminars on funding and acquisitions, panels on the latest trends, and well-organized networking ses-

SOME PRODUCTIONS WITH U.S. PARTICIPATION BACKED BY THE NRW FILM FOUNDATION:

Chris Bould, *Midnight Flight*, $900,000, 1996

Kirby Dick, *Guy*, $143,175, 1995

Uli Edel, *Der Kleine Vampir* (*The Little Vampire*), $1.5 million, 1998

Josef Rusnak, *The Thirteenth Floor*, $1.9 million, 1997

Ann Hu, *Shadow Magic*, $286,351, 1998

Sidney Lumet, *The Beautiful Mrs. Seigenmann*, $2.3 million, 2000

Syd Macartney, *The Whipping Boy*, $954,000, 1992

Mira Nair, *Kama Sutra*, $365,096, 1996

Jim Jarmusch, *Dead Man*, $167,038, 1993

Mark Rappaport, *Exterior Night*, $386,096, 1993

Thilo Rotkirch, *Der Kleine Eisbaer* (*The Little Ice Bear*), $1.4 million, 1999

John Schlesinger, *The Innocent*, $860,000, 1992

Jeremy Swan, Michael Kerrigan, *The Secret Life of Toys*, $1.2 million, 1993

Tom Tykwer, *Heaven*, $1.4 million, 2000

(Director tba), ***The Bobbsey Twins*** (screenplay by Chris Boebel), $95,000 for preproduction.

sions. The market comprises both an official market aimed at Europeans and the so-called Black Market for projects from other countries, including the U.S. in the future. Black Market documentation lists the specifications for proposed co-productions and essential data on the producer/director, which in turn are made available in the *Black Book* to all market participants. The co-production market is held in the Cologne Flora, a turn of the century art nouveau building and botanical garden. It provides the ideal setting and atmosphere to make the necessary funding and co-production contacts, and to meet the key players from the dynamic NRW Film Foundation.

Claus Mueller [cmueller@hunter.cuny.edu] is a New York-based media analyst who curates the annual New York Screening Days and teaches at Hunter College.

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In 1974 the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers was founded by a group of *resolutely* independent media artists. These folks recognized the power of media as a populist artform that could create avenues for democracy and social empowerment, and crafted AIVF as a trade association designed to provide a collective voice for media artists working outside the corporate system. At the same time, the founding members worked to support each other by sharing resources and inspiration.

The following year, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) was incorporated as an educational nonprofit to support the work of AIVF by providing education and information—for example, by publishing this magazine! Through the years the core goals of these twin organizations have been to increase professional opportunities for independent media producers and to expand the media arts field: fostering a public space for the viewing of a broad range of work and the related exchange of images and ideas.

Happy Anniversary AIVF

ELIZABETH peters

AIVF members prize our practical resources such as member discounts and group insurance options, honest and reliable information, and a sense of the scale and diversity of our community as reflected in the pages of *The Independent*. And yet AIVF performs even more work on behalf of the field, much of it "invisible" on a day by day basis.

In fact, because AIVF's work is broad and continuous, for the most part, rather than event specific (as in screening series, awards programs, or festivals), it can be hard to provide a succinct explanation of what exact we do do. Here's a try.

Each month, hundreds of producers participate in our workshops and regional salon programs. Thousands receive answers to questions simple and complex, by phone and by e-mail. Tens of thousands read *The Independent* and/or visit our web resource, www.aivf.org. And millions—artists and audiences combine—benefit from the advocacy work we have performed on behalf of the field.

The Independent serves as an essential resource for producers working at various professional levels across a broad range of media and subject areas. Our resource publications are regarded as virtual "bibles" to the field and help minimize the obstacles facing producers working outside of the industry structure. Our workshops, resource library, and information services cut to the chase: valuing the utility of concrete, reliable information.

Founded and still based in New York City, AIVF also thoroughly represents a national constituency, with membership drawn from all walks of life across all parts of the country. Magazine coverage and programmatic partnerships provide special attention to regional infrastructures outside of the primary production centers. Twenty AIVF Regional Salons conduct meetings on a regular basis.

Additionally, AIVF provides a nexus between generations of artists. The vast majority of our members have been working in the field for over 10 years: a significant number, for over 30! At the same time, we are working with a growing number of emerging makers. AIVF addresses the needs of artists over the course of their professional lifetime. We provide a place where a generation of artists characterized by activism and professionalism intermingles with an evolving generation characterized by enterprise and experimentation. The confluence enriches the life and work of all makers.

The past year has been a challenging one for AIVF/FIVF. We have had a large turn over of both staff and board. Of our 10-person staff, only two remain who have been with the organization longer than three years. After the current board elections, only one board member will remain who has been with the organization longer than five years. The influx of "new blood" has brought exciting new ideas, energy, and connections to the organization. But we have lost some of our history.

This challenge is compounded by the ongoing financial pressure inherent in operating a public interest nonprofit. While AIVF's earned income continues to dramatically increase, support from government and private sources has declined. All of our financial resources are concentrated on providing a broad slate of programs and services. Our goals are perhaps more expansive than our resources can support, yet we can't help but see additional, important work for us to do on behalf of the field. Fortuantely, like independent producers we have learned how to stretch a thin dime, getting the greatest "production value" from our limited budget.

In a way, the challenges and opportunities we face mirror those faced by independent producers themselves. This is a dynamic moment for our field: the capacity to produce and distribute work has never been greater, yet at the same time we are witnessing the continuing erosion of funding opportunities, not to mention accountability in public media.

Throughout this millennial year, FIVF has celebrated our 25th Anniversary through the "In Retrospect" column of this magazine. These excerpts provide historical snapshots of our focus and goals at various moments in our field's history: sometimes amusing, sometimes chilling, always on top of the issues most important to independent artists. In this issue, we are taking a few pages to revisit in greater depth some of the work to advance the field we have performed over the years.

Today the organization has a very different form that the member-run collective that came together in 1974. Still, our objectives remain essentially the same, and are perhaps more valid than ever within a culture of rapidly expanding technologies and the ever-increasing concentration of powers into a handful of corporate entities. AIVF and FIVF remain vital and important organizations because they speak for producers and works across the entirety of the broad spectrum of the media arts field. Together, we have a lot more work to.

But for now, please enjoy this moment where we remind ourselves we have a lot to celebrate as well!

Elizabeth Peters is the executive director of AIVF and FIVF and publisher of The Independent.

AIVF Helps Put the Public Back in Public TV

PAUL power

Public television was established with great pride in 1967 as one of the final programs of LBJ's Great Society, created to ensure diversity and innovation on the public airwaves. But the chill wind of retrenchment had already started to blow before the end of Richard Nixon's tenure. By the time FIVF was founded in January 1975 (AIVF had been established the previous June), independents had a battle on their hands. The fight for a fair share of public television funding was one of the lobbying efforts that put AIVF on the map, and it has continued to be a cornerstore of the organization's advocacy.

AIVF's first victory came in 1978, when Congress was debating the Public Telecommunications Financing Act. Testimony from AIVF and representatives from the independent community ensured that Congress inserted the term "substantial" in the new legislation—in effect providing for a "substantial" portion of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's program dollars to be made available to independent producers. (Congressional sponsors of the measure agreed that "substantial" meant at least 50% of available funds.)

Further testimony the following year at the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Broadcasting fed into the Carnegie Report, *A Public Trust*, recommending, among other things, the creation of a Center for Independent Television to fund independent work and the setting up of fair program selection procedures.

By 1983, under pressure from the Reagan administration, Congress had slashed the CPB budget to $137 million (from $200 million in 1980) and then had advocated the sale of product advertisements by several stations to make up the shortfall, a move which AIVF also strenuously opposed. Meanwhile, CPB was not living up to its promises, and independent producers were getting squeezed out of the picture. AIVF continued to protest as ever-larger chunks of CPB funding were channeled to station consortia, such as WGBH for station-produced series like *Frontline*. Station producers such as Bill Moyers, Robert McNeill, and Jim Lehrer were setting themselves up as "independents" to avail of funds for independents, says AIVF board member and early AIVF activist DeeDee Halleck. The end result was CPB's designation in 1983 of a $6 million Open Solicitation Fund devoted principally—though not exclusively—to independent production.

The tone of the Reagan administration, which had made overtures towards totally defunding public television, sounded warning bells for independents in the early '80s. In 1984, a coalition of producer representatives and media center directors, led by a triumvirate dubbed "The Three Larrys" (AIVF executive director Lawrence Sapadin, California Newsreel's Lawrence Daressa, and Larry Hall, a public advocate who was a veteran of the 1978 victory), met with CPB just prior to congressional reauthorization of the public TV service. This coalition, which came to be known as the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (NCIPBP), put forward a case to CPB that programs such as *Frontline* should not be counted as "independent productions," and there should be an increase in the Open Solicitation Fund. Ralph Arlyck, who was party to the Carnegie discussions and these later meetings with CPB, recalls how "[Daressa, Hall, Sapadin] and I had a discussion and asked ourselves 'What's the most outrageous, outlandish thing we could ask for?' and it was an independent television service. Congress historically didn't like set-asides, preferring to work within the CPB/PBS legislation. And lo and behold they gave it to us! I think we were a breath a fresh air, made a strong case, and were different from other TV stations."

Their case was aided by an intensive lobbying effort the coalition roused to beat the drum for such a measure, coupled with a rising degree of public discontent with public television. As editorialists and commentators complained, PBS stations had taken to showing *Lassie* and *Leave it to Beaver* reruns and neglecting their legislated mandate to use "this natural resource [the public airwaves] to its fullest for the betterment of individual and community life."

In 1991, AIVF could celebrate another key victory: the creation by congressional statute of a new organization designed to funnel a portion of CPB appropriations directly to independent mediamakers: the Independent Television Service (ITVS), which currently provides $7 million per year in production funding to to the field. In addition, five minority consortia were created to fund and package works by Black, Latino, Native American, Pacific Islanders, and Asian American filmmakers (each currently distributes $636,000 in production grants). Since its inception, ITVS has funded 193 independent programs.

In hindsight, Arlyck feels the victory had a double edge to it: "ITVS and [the NCIPBP] gave public TV a reason not to deal with independent producers any more. It was like saying: 'That's your ghetto—leave us to pledge week, antiques shows, and animal shows.' "

Getting independent work seen on the public television system has continued to be a struggle. In 1992, WNET's *Independent Focus* was pulled off the air. Again, AIVF went into advocacy mode, and together with Media Alliance and Women Make Movies, was instrumental in the reinstatement of a weekly screening series, *Reel NY*.

While the battle lines are not as clearly drawn these days, the organization continues its lobbying and maintains a watch over the system. AIVF is still involved in the selection of individuals for the ITVS board and is on the committee that oversees ITVS's direction. "One thing we learned was that building alliances is very important," notes Arlyck. "Institutions have a way of accruing power to themselves."

Contact the NCIPBP at coalition@hotmail.com and learn more about ITVS at www.itvs.org.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.

A short history of Short Film Showcase

PATRICIA thomson

Pop Quiz: WHEN IS THE LAST TIME SHORT FILMS REGULARLY appeared in commercial movie theaters before the feature?

a) When Betty Boop was sashaying across Depression-era screens
b) When the road pictures of Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour lifted post-war spirits
c) When Jaws introduced the era of the blockbuster
d) When She's Gotta Have It *revved up the indie movement*

If you guessed d), you'll get funny looks, but you can be smugly satisfied. For it was during the 1980s that shorts enjoyed a renaissance in theaters, thanks to an AIVF program called Short Film Showcase.

Between 1977 and 1989, Short Film Showcase (SFS) distributed innovative shorts free of charge to approximately 7,000 screens across the country. Animations and short subjects by the likes of Jane Aaron, Bruce Baillie, Jordan Belson, Robert Breer, Gunvor Nelson, Robert Nelson, and D.A. Pennebaker, among others, reached millions of moviegoers through this program. Administered by AIVF and entirely funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, SFS used a peer panel system to select up to 12 films every year for distribution. SFS paid filmmakers a stipend of $3,000 and subsidized both the blow-up of their films to 35mm and the cost of multiple release prints.

Today, it's hard to recall a time when shorts were shut out of distribution as completely as they were when SFS got started. Back in 1977, cable television was in its infancy, there was no Internet, and movie theaters had phased out shorts decades earlier, when the rise of television gave theaters a run for their money and they responded by introducing the double feature.

But at this time the NEA was relatively new, rambunctious, and decidedly activist. In those pre-Reagan years, its advisory board, the National Council, was more interested in being a catalyst than an art censor. "We were looking to create models, looking for areas where we could make a difference," recalls Cliff Whitham, the NEA program officer who oversaw SFS in the eighties. "In the early years, everyone was making things up as we went along, and we had more money each year." Plus, with film directors like Robert Wise and George Stevens on the National Council, says Whitham, "there was a pretty activist position regarding media." Stevens' suggestions ultimately led to the creation of the American Film Institute, while Wise was behind the idea that eventually became Short Film Showcase.

In creating SFS, the NEA was consciously harkening back to another era of movie-going. According to Whitham, it was a way "to look back at a time when the movie-going experience was used for more than just trailers and features. Whether cartoons or newsreels, those shorts represented an avenue to different film experiences. So it was that idea, plus the fact that there were all these filmmakers doing shorts and where were the venues, particularly those that reached a wider audience?"

There was one more reason for funding SFS, adds Whitham. "To throw some support to FIVF. This was never stated explicitly, but it was a way to help get their name out there and for us to say, 'This supports a group that does good work.' "

AIVF hired project directors who had ties in the commercial film world—first Alan Mitosky, then Sol Horwitz. Their job was to pound on doors, persuade theaters to program their shorts, and possibly wrangle some matching dollars out of exhibitors. Over time, they made inroads and soon the SFS phone was ringing with requests for prints.

Some of the most popular shorts were accessible crowd-pleasers, like Chuck Workman's homage to movie classics, *Precious Images*. According to Horwitz, who'd worked for many years as a booker and buyer for commercial theater chains, "As classy as you want to get, you gotta give 'em entertainment." But others were more off beat. Horwitz was clearly willing to throw a curve ball every so often.



SFS's Sol Horwitz showed Stan Brakage's *Mothlight* at a National Association of Theater Owners meeting — and got some bookings as a result.

"Sol was a brave soul," recalls Whitham. "At a meeting of the National Association of Theater Owners, he showed them Stan Brakhage's *Mothlight*," an experimental silent short made by pressing fragments of moth wings, leaves, and detritus directly onto a celluloid strip. "To see that film projected in 35mm at the Uptown Theaters in Washington with an audience full of distributors..." Whitham's voice trails off in awed wonder. "There was complete silence in the theater. But it was a *respectful* silence. I remember people asking him about the film afterwards, asking for material on it. And subsequently the film did get played as part of the series. I thought it was the bravest thing! To put Stan Brakhage in movie theaters across the country was just a remarkable achievement."

Over time, conditions changed yet again. Independent movie houses were gobbled up by chains. Screen time became more valuable. Shorts were out; paid advertising was in. Cable TV and home video were changing the media landscape and offering new possibilities for shorts. Meanwhile, theaters never stepped up to the plate to help with the direct costs of SFS. So in 1989, the NEA pulled the plug.

"Short Film Showcase was a noble attempt that responded to certain needs and had its achievements," says Whitham, "but at some point there was no longer a compelling need for the program. But it ran for 12 years, and it was a good run."

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent. *One of her first jobs at AIVF was shipping SFS prints to theaters around the country.*

COURTESY ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES.

Negotiating SAG's LEA Contract

SCOTT castle

Creativity, actors, and indie directors have a symbiotic relationship. Directors relish quality performances that reveal the power and nuance of their ambitious work, while actors appreciate the provocative, meaty roles that independents provide. But financially, the relationship can be strained, especially when it comes to paying union wages on a shoe-string budget.

One of AIVF's most important contract negotiations on behalf of independent filmmakers was with the Screen Actors Guild. AIVF went to bat for low-budget filmmakers back in 1986, when the indie feature movement was just picking up steam, and negotiated a contract with the SAG that remains a key enabling factor in hundreds of independent productions.



Spike Lee's inability to use SAG's Experimental Film Contract spurred AIVF to help create the LEA.

Prior to AIVF's involvement, there were just two SAG agreements designed to soften the blow to smaller projects. The Low-Budget Agreement was for productions of $500,000 or less, but was still out of reach for many independent producers because of the costly requirements of a high daily rate for actors, benefits, and foremost, the prohibition of mixing SAG and non-SAG actors.

The other option for independents was the Experimental Film Contract. But this was restricted to films under 30 minutes with budgets under $30,000. For the most part, the length stipulation negated the possibility of independent features qualifying, but a few producers managed to work out special agreements with SAG for their feature-length productions. A special agreement was drafted for Jill Godmilow's *Far from Poland* (1984) and Mark Rappaport's *Chain Letters* (1985). Both were legitimately "experimental" in nature, however.

Something in the middle was needed. The challenge to SAG arrived in the form of a young Spike Lee, who was trying to arrange an agreement with SAG for his narrative debut, *Messenger*. Though his budget of $60,000 was higher than the experimental contract's limit, it was lower than either *Far from Poland* or *Chain Letters*. But Lee was turned down because his film was deemed "too commercial," according to SAG. Lee responded with a racial discrimination complaint and later went on to make *She's Gotta Have It* with a non-union cast. But Lee's struggle attracted the attention of Lawrence Sapadin, a former labor lawyer who was then executive director of AIVF.

Sapadin wrote to SAG on Lee's behalf calling the "experimental" parameters too inflexible. "We argued to SAG that there was a species of independent filmmaker that was serious enough to attract serious acting talent, yet had almost no budget to speak of," explains Sapadin, "and there ought to be a way not to penalize the actors and prevent them from participating in this level of artistic creation." Without such an agreement, actors faced fines or even the loss their SAG cards for performing in non-SAG projects.

SAG and AIVF sat down to craft a new agreement. The quandary was how to single out low-budget, artistic projects without opening the floodgates to a slew of low-budget, but commercially-minded films, namely horror and other genre pictures. "If you only looked at budget, you were not going to identify the right kind of production," says Sapadin. "You could have any kind of pornography or very commercial work with a budget under [the limit.]"

Negotiations went around in circles, with both sides attempting to establish a discount for independent films without becoming the gatekeepers of content. "Obviously SAG couldn't get into content regulation, reading scripts and saying, 'Not artistic enough,' " Sapadin recalls.

John Sucke, then SAG's assistant executive secretary, now its executive director in New York, worked closely with Sapadin to create a new system of evaluation that would allow independents and SAG actors to work together while protecting the financial and artistic needs of all involved. "Somewhere in the course of the conversation, we shifted from *budget* as a criteria to the *scope of distribution*—the idea being that this type of production was typically going to be shown in mainly arthouse and showcase theaters," explains Sapadin.

The resulting solution came in early 1986, in the form of the Independent Producers ' Limited Exhibition Agreement (LEA), which extended the experimental contract to feature-length films and tapes budgeted at under $200,000. The LEA allowed for screenings before non-paying audiences, film societies, and limited runs in showcase theaters.

But a few years later, the lack of specifics about what constituted a "showcase theater" caused some controversy and led to the rewriting of the LEA. The catalyst was the film *Frankenstein General Hospital*, which in May 1989 was charged with violating the contract with a short run in commercial theaters in Nevada and Texas. SAG eventually lost in arbitration after it was decided that the term "showcase theaters" lacked a specification definition. Sucke and Sapadin again attempted to eliminate "the temptation to abuse the purpose of the agreement," according to Sucke. The revised agreement allows "runs up to two weeks in 'art houses' and small-audience theaters, specializing in new creative films." And examples of such theaters, including New York's Film Forum and San Francisco's Roxie Cinema, were penned directly into the new contract to avoid further confusion. The revised contract went into effect in July 1991 with budgetary increases to $200,000 (excluding deferrals) and $500,000 (including deferrals).

The only major addition to the agreement since then has been the inclusion of Los Angeles, which had previously been the only area exempted. Last year 24 projects used the LEA in New York, while over 75 took advantage of its relatively new availability in L.A., each project benefiting from AIVF and SAG's dedication to expanding opportunities for filmmakers.

Scott Castle is listings editor of The Independent.

Defending the Arts: AIVF and the NEA

PATRICIA thomson

Another front that has long distinguished AIVF from other national film organizations is its advocacy work for public funding for the media arts, particularly through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This struggle parallels AIVF's battle for public television, as both were begun early in the organization's history in reaction to the incoming Reagan Administration's agenda: to defund cultural and social programs as it stepped up military spending, in the process unraveling 30 years of Democratic initiatives.

The shift was felt quickly. In his first budget, Reagan proposed slashing appropriations for the NEA and NEH in half. AIVF swiftly organized a press conference featuring directors Robert Young, Barbara Kopple, William Greaves, Duart president Irwin Young, theater director Joanne Akalaitis—17 speakers in all who opposed Reagan's plan, plus written statements from Robert Redford, Joanne Woodward, Milos Foreman, Lee Grant, and others.

Arguing that arts funding is economically sound, with every dollar in funding stimulating five dollars in matching contributions from the private sector, AIVF executive director Larry Sapadin cautioned that chopping the endowments in half "may be only the first step towards their complete elimination.

"Other programs on the chopping block are the CETA work training program, the food stamp program, public television and legal services: jobs, food, information and legal recourse—all slated to be cut brutally, dramatically, while unprecedented military spending goes unquestioned and unexamined.

"This is not austerity. This is the most sweeping realignment of power since the New Deal. These cuts are not economic. They are political."

Sapadin's comments proved prescient. Soon Republicans dropped the ruse of a fiscal rationale behind their cuts to the arts and repainted their efforts as a moral campaign. Demon after demon was subsequently unmasked by congressional exorcists like Senators Jesse Helms and Alfonse d'Amato. A parade of arts funding "scandals" marched through congressional halls and kept Republican firebrands burning throughout the eighties and early nineties: Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, Karen Finley and Tim Miller's performances, David Wojnarovicz's paintings. The media arts did not pass unscathed. In particular, gay and lesbian film festivals and films offering a view of homosexuality were singled out as "indecent," including Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*, Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman*, and Todd Haynes' *Poison*. With each fight, funding for the arts was carved away.

Readers of this magazine will recall many of these battles in the culture wars. Through news articles and feature stories, *The Independent* was an important vehicle through which AIVF kept film- and videomakers informed about specific skirmishes, the broader context, and the lasting implications.



AIVF staff at the time of its first NEA press conference: (l-r) John Creyson, Susan Linfield, Mary Guzzy, Fran Platt, Wendy Lidell, and exec dir. Lawrence Sapadin.

This is not all that AIVF did. There was also the unglamorous, laborious, largely invisible, but all-important task of advocacy. In concrete terms, this often boiled down to working the phones prior to a critical vote on an appropriation or reauthorization committee. Many a day *Independent* and AIVF staffers set aside their regular jobs to work with volunteers, calling up AIVF members who lived in key congressional districts, briefing them on NEA votes, and asking them to contact their congressman. These calls were supplemented by advocacy alerts and sample letters mailed out to the AIVF membership.

Other days were spent on an Albany-bound bus or on the Metroliner to Washington, where we would meet with our representatives and speak on behalf of AIVF's 5,000 members in support of continued arts funding.

Still other days we might drop everything to respond to a direct cry for help from an NEA staffer, such as the time when the Media Arts program learned at the last minute that they were going to be grilled about *Poison* at the following day's congressional hearing. The film had received positive reviews and thoughtful critical discussion, and the NEA needed quick assistance collecting this material, to prove the film was not "deviant," but a serious work of film art. They turned to AIVF for help, and we responded without hesitation.

In the end, we cannot say that we "won" the culture wars. The NEA is a shadow of what it was in the 1970s, and the nonprofit media arts infrastructure has shrunk dramatically. We'll never know how many films were not made, festivals not run, or alternative screens not lit up because seed money from the NEA was no longer available. Meanwhile, younger filmmakers are too quickly throwing their hat in the commercial ring.



Media darling Robert Mapplethorpe

But neither can we say that the war was lost. Unlike CETA, the NEA and NEH still stand. Just last year, the agencies awarded approximately $80 million and $115 million respectively. That's still something.

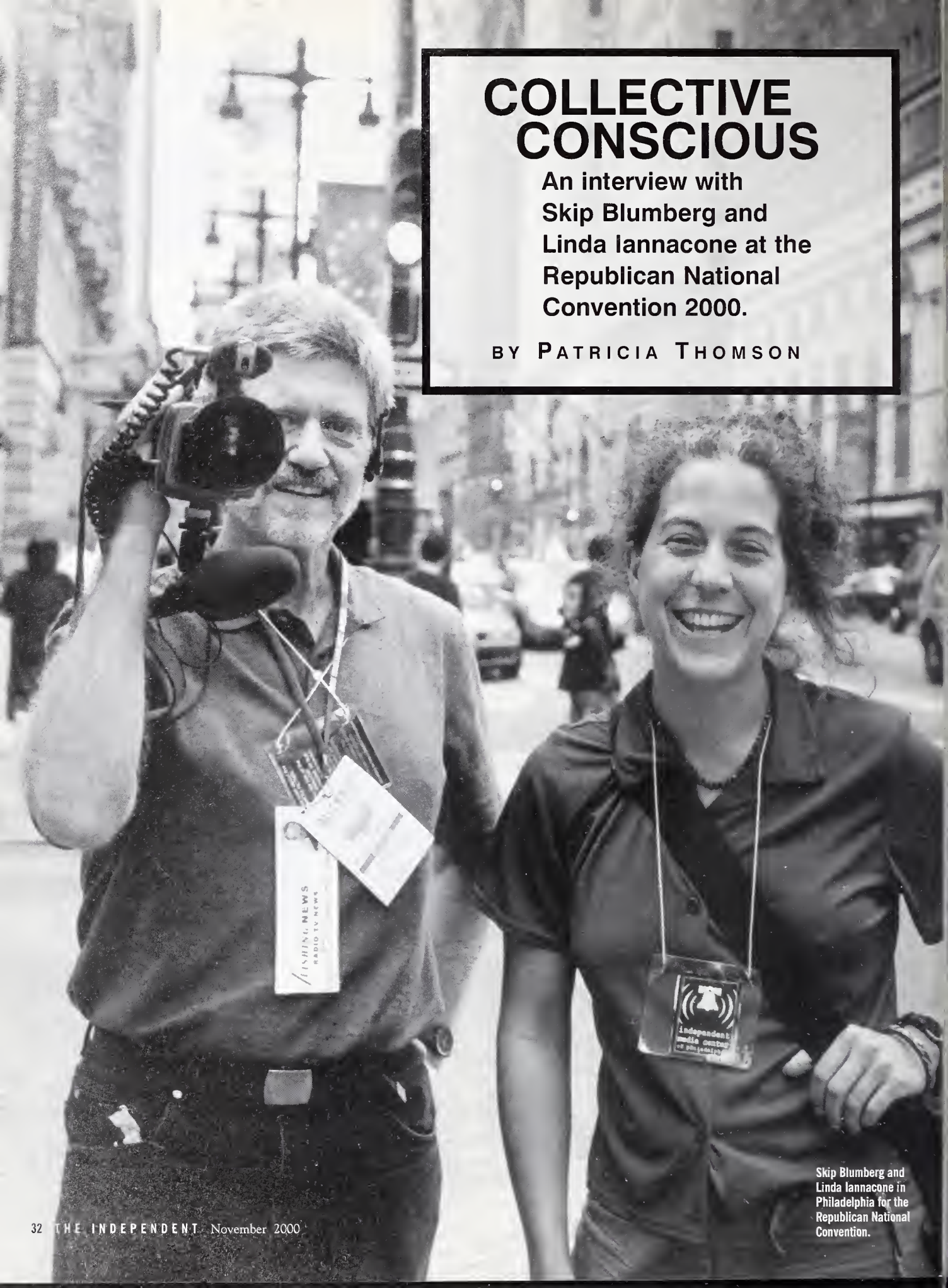
Under the Clinton Administration, the anti-NEA rhetoric has calmed down and the agency's budget has climbed every so slightly. But whether the culture wars are over is a question that may be determined by the outcome of this month's election. If Republicans gain the upper hand and renew their crusade against public funding for the arts, you'll no doubt be hearing again from AIVF. •

COURTESY LARRY SAPADIN (TOP) & GABRIELLE FILMS

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUS

An interview with Skip Blumberg and Linda Iannacone at the Republican National Convention 2000.

BY PATRICIA THOMSON



Skip Blumberg and Linda Iannacone in Philadelphia for the Republican National Convention.

REMEMBER THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION, LIGHT YEARS AGO LAST AUGUST? It's no wonder if you don't. This Up with People jamboree left TV viewers grabbing their remotes, and 15,000 journalists looking under rocks for something, anything newsworthy.

Some actually found it—though not necessarily inside the convention hall. The real action in both Philly and L.A. was out on the streets, where various activist groups had converged to bring attention to their causes, ranging from poverty and homelessness, to police brutality, to big money's sway in government.

Documenting it all in depth were hundreds of media activists and independent journalists, who came together under the banner of the Independent Media Center (IMC). Replicating the structure first created in Seattle last winter to chronicle the World Trade Organization protests, then again in Washington for the World Bank demonstrations, IMC represents a remarkable reemergence of collectivist energy that is now utilizing an infrastructure built up by over the past decade by organizations like Free Speech TV, Deep Dish TV, and Paper Tiger Television, as well as community television and social activist groups around the country.

Housed in an old hotel ballroom in Philadelphia's Center City, IMC was buzzing with activity when *The Independent* paid it a visit. A dispatch desk faced the door, while behind it stood various departments marked by funky hand-written cardboard signs: Video, Photo, Radio. In one corner, a group of volunteer lawyers were replaying a video, intensely scrutinizing a policeman's movements as he grappled with some demonstrators. Along a side wall, photographers for IMC's daily newspaper, *The Unconvention*, were scanning negatives for the photo bank. In a quiet back room, a pirate radio DJ was on the air. And in the rear corner, a live TV broadcast of *Democracy Now* was in progress. Anchors Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez were interviewing four mushroom harvesters who spoke about the severe working conditions in their industry. (The connection? Pennsylvania is the largest producer of mushrooms in the U.S.)

Prior to the convention, *Democracy Now* had been a radio show produced by Pacifica station WBAI in New York. Its leap to live television came about after both Free Speech TV and Deep Dish TV approached them about doing a version of the series for TV broadcast. Their talks become more serious after the WTO demonstrations in Seattle and the emergence of an IMC infrastructure. With IMC chapters in Philadelphia and L.A. that could help facilitate their operations, *Democracy Now* and Pacifica gave a cautious thumbs up, and they were off and running, using the conventions as their starting point.

One of the key video producers was media activist and AIVF board member DeeDee Halleck. She recruited Skip Blumberg, a video artist, experienced cameraman, and veteran of seven political conventions, to serve as videographer. Back in 1972, Blumberg was part of the iconoclastic Top Value TV (TVTV) group that managed to snag press accreditation to the conventions of Nixon and McGovern, and rewrote the rules of campaign coverage with their now-classic verité documentaries *Four More Years* and *The World's Largest TV Studio*. Another member of *Democracy Now*'s video team was Linda Iannacone, a younger producer who cut her teeth working with the Paper Tiger TV collective for 10 years. She then became a key player during IMC's earlier incarnations in Seattle and Washington, and was acting as technical director and segment producer on the *Democracy Now* set in Philadelphia.

Following the morning broadcast, Blumberg and Iannacone paused from their whirlwind schedule to sit down to talk. Both veterans of media collectives, they reflected on how collectives work and the difference three decades make, as well as their experiences in Philadelphia.

How do collectives function differently today than in the seventies?

Linda Iannacone: What's really valuable here is that we operate as a media collective, but we're very much engaged with collectives of political activists working for social change. I'd be curious to know how much that happened in the past. The link has never been clearer in my mind than when these Independent Media Centers were set up.

Skip Blumberg: In the early days, there was immediate connection between what we were doing and the substance-oriented activists. The first time there was Earth Day, they came to us and said, 'Can you do video projections?' Then the Black Panther party came to us, then the Yippies and Abbie Hoffman. The activists saw they couldn't get their message out through the mass media. Even though it now seems tightly controlled, at the time, there were only three networks.

Initially, collectives formed to share equipment after Sony introduced the Portapak in the late sixties. We each had our own Portapaks, but then we formed to share editing, audio equipment, and other facilities. But the other motivation was also protest—against the war in Vietnam, the injustices against minorities and women, and the horrors going on in the environment. In addition to that, we wanted to establish what was called at the time 'alternate culture.' In the same way there were alternate systems that involved education, transportation, architecture, music, or newspapers, we were trying to establish an alternative way of doing television. So that there was a real positive, pro-active movement not to just protest, but to establish solutions.

When you say 'us,' who do you mean?

Blumberg: We were a finite community. I was with Videofreex at the time, and there was Raindance, Antfarm on the West Coast, and the Whole Earth catalog people. We all knew and cooperated with each other.

In that sense, the Top Value TV umbrella seems very similar to what's happening here in Philadelphia: Various production collectives, including the ones you mentioned, coming together to create a bigger coalition for a specific purpose, in this case, alternative coverage of the political conventions.

Blumberg: What TVTV did was to bring us to mainstream politics. It took us right into the belly of the beast. TVTV was not political as much as they were iconoclastic. We covered not ourselves—alternate culture—but mainstream politics and culture, and [*Four More Years* and *The World's Largest TV Studio*] were broadcast on the Westinghouse stations after going up on cable.

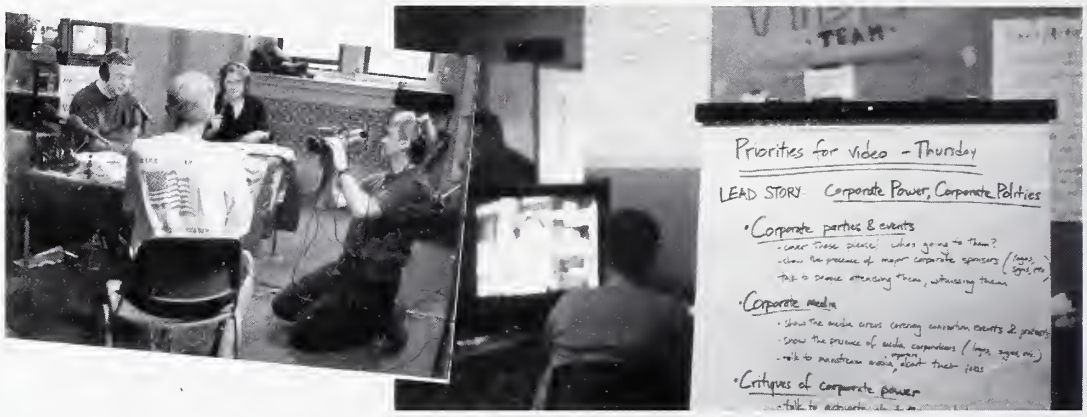
PHOTOS PGS 32-34: PATRICIA THOMSON

Reading a contemporaneous account of TVTV in Timothy Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus*, that's what struck me the most: your tapes' neutrality. As Crouse wrote, "They were extraordinarily intimate portraits of the convention and, surprisingly, they reflected no particular ideology."

Blumberg: TVTV didn't have necessarily a political point of view, but it was looking at the ironies and lies of the media. We were trying to reveal what wasn't being seen on the mainstream media, which really blew everybody away at the time. After the Democratic convention, the networks acquired our tapes; CBS played them in house, just because we scooped them journalistically. We had contacts with Willie Brown and the California delegation and showed what was going on behind the scenes.

They were also beginning to explore how they could make use of these new smaller-format cameras.

Blumberg: It was more of a journalistic coup. We humiliated them—the fact that we found a story out that they had no concept of, even though they were on the floor, and they were totally surprised why the delegations were voting a certain way.



Left: Skip Blumberg shoots *Democracy Now* anchors Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez during an interview. Right: IMC's video priorities for another day at the convention.

Iannacone: That totally mirrored the situation in Seattle, then in Washington and here, too. Almost the first day, CNN and all the major media networks came and covered the Independent Media Center. Not only was it a very interesting story in itself—the fact that this large independent clearinghouse for journalists of a variety of media came together. But in the case of Seattle, we were down in the streets and getting footage, voices, and stories that the helicopters of ABC never would have gotten. They knew that and covered us almost immediately.

Blumberg: In terms of the project we're working on now, *Democracy Now* prides itself on breaking stories. One of their ethics is 'steal this story,' because they have a very strong mission of getting the word out.

How much is that happening? Do you know of examples?

Blumberg: The easiest one to see is how *Democracy Now* brought Ralph Nader onto the floor of the Republican convention as a political analyst for our show, and he was completely swarmed by every major [news outlet].

Can you describe how the evening satellite show works, and what is the interface between the IMC's coverage and *Democracy Now*?

Iannacone: The IMC's production, called *Crashing the Party*, is produced by a bunch of different production collectives and various local independent producers who come under the umbrella of Indie Media Philadelphia. [All of the *Crashing the Party* and *Democracy Now* programs are archived on www.freespeech.org.] The collectives include Changing America, Paper Tiger TV, Deep Dish TV, and a group called I Witness, which has come together specifically to cover cops and police brutality as video witnesses.

Blumberg: We share the same space as our live studio. We share the satellite feed, which is through Free Speech TV and Deep Dish TV and carried by DirectTV. And we share some footage.

Iannacone: Which is really important. The way *Crashing the Party* works is there's a whole process by which videographers who are going out into the streets bring their material back to IMC, then dub and log what they bring in. That becomes a pool. So it's really produced by hundreds of people under the direction and coordination of various production groups.

Blumberg: Literally hundreds. One way that worked beautifully was this morning. DeeDee [Halleck] looked out the window and saw this thunderstorm happening. She realized that the protestors who are keeping a vigil outside the jail where their compatriots are incarcerated were getting blown away by these huge winds and rainstorm. So she went over to the Indie Media [people] and said, 'Do you have a crew?' And they dispatched this guy with a camcorder on a bicycle and poncho, and he went over at 4 a.m. and got some footage. And we ended up using that in our show, which went on at 8 a.m.

Iannacone: The very first night, I got a tip that a banner-drop by ACT-UP was going to be done. I knew that a videographer with *Crashing the Party* was going to be out there. Then in the morning I learned that *Democracy Now* had booked an AIDS activist at the last minute to come on and talk about that. So 15 minutes before we were going to that guest, someone got the tape from that videographer and we were able to show the banner drop. In that way, the interface—working in the same space—allows us all to benefit from material, footage, and ideas.

We all just help each other out in so many ways. Yesterday I ended up helping somebody take video stills of some very grievous, horrible police brutality acts, so they could put the stills into their daily newspaper, called *The Unconvention*. There was no one else who could do that except for the video team, so we totally help each other.

Blumberg: Structurally, there's this IMC, which is hundreds of video people, print people, a web site, photographers, radio—all using this space. And we're producing our show in this rather

chaotic environment of people running around, sleeping on the floor. We are part of that whole collective, too, and have certain responsibilities—keeping our space clean, for instance, and making reports to their general meetings.

Do you share news stories, as well?

Iannacone: Usually they listen to *Democracy Now*, and certainly informally. We all talk to each other.

Blumberg: But there's loads of stuff happening, from our perspective. Maybe not from the major media's. They're covering Philly steaks.

With so many people involved in *Crashing the Party*, how do they decide what actually goes up each night?

Iannacone: It's an hour-and-a-half program, and they slot it out. So a half hour is produced by Philly Indie Media, a collective of about 10 people. And they probably have that slotted out between themselves. They all know they have either a certain amount of time to fill or a certain issue to follow, like Changing America follows mainly labor issues. But no one knows specifically what that coverage is going to be until the broadcast goes up. There's just a general trust that you're given that time, and you'll do a valuable story with it.

Is this how it worked in Seattle and Washington?

Iannacone: Almost identically. We broadcast a half-hour every day in Seattle. There was a group of five to six production collectives or pairs of people. We'd pitch stories at an evening production meeting after the day's events had gone on and got a sense of what was happening. We'd break it down and say, "Okay, do a five minute segment on that; you do a three-minute segment on police brutality; you do a segment on the World Trade Organization and how it relates to South America."

So there was joint editorial decision-making in order to cover all the stories without redundancy.

Iannacone: And to feed material. Like, 'Oh, wow! I happened to talk to an AIDS activist today and I have some material I can feed to you.'

How many people would take part in an editorial discussion like that?

Iannacone: In Seattle, we had production meetings that were about 20 people. Here it's about the same.

Skip, in 1972 the entire TVTV group was about 20 to 30 people, right?

Blumberg: I think what's going on now is more comparable to *The Five Day Bicycle Race*, which we did in '76.

Because that was live?

Blumberg: Yes, it was a live three-hour daily show that we did with tape roll-ins. And there were about 50 or 75 people—or 100; it's hard to count. An incredible explosion. It's great to see the continuation of that and to see it's far beyond what we could have imagined in those days.

After the collectives of the seventies, there seems to have been a long hiatus until recently. I can think of only a few local collectives from the 1980s and '90s.

Blumberg: Paper Tiger and Deep Dish provided the continuity. The nature of video is that it's a group production, so there have been various examples, even throughout that period. But there's been nothing this major until Seattle. It's a difference in kind, not just degree. We were doing a mom and pop kind of operation. We all knew each other very well. Now it's national.

Would this have been possible without the Internet?

Iannacone: No.

So the Internet is one reason why we're seeing something like the IMC emerge at this point in time?

Iannacone: I guess. Clearly, just having email, listserves, and the Internet helps link the media activity with the political activity. And logistically you can actually do it; you can have a conversation for two months building up to an event. People around the country—and in some cases, the world—can plan together, so you're on the same page when you meet face to face. It's amazing. The hard work of organizing is understanding where you're coming from and building from that.



An arrest and street protest caught by Harvey Finkel, one of the many photographers whose images went up on IMC's web site.

What's the "alternative" part of alternative media today? Before 1972, only the three networks were allowed into the conventions with cameras. Now you're operating in a media universe that's got webcasters for the first time, as well cable TV, broadcast, and print media. Altogether, 15,000 journalists were accredited to cover the convention.

Blumberg: The strength of *Democracy Now* is that it provides information that people aren't getting. Journalistically it's showing people actions and content they wouldn't normally see on the 500 other channels on cable TV. You're right, though. The Comedy Channel is covering the conventions.

Iannacone: There are lots of angles happening, and we are the street activist angle. The audience we probably speak to first—thought hopefully not only—is the community of activists. We feed back their voices, so there's a knowledge, a presence, and a collective memory that this happened. And then we speak out to the wider audience.

This is new for me—addressing a much wider audience. I've worked in Paper Tiger and community TV, and it's very much 'target audience' material. I've been very proud of that and not apologized for not wanting a mainstream thing for myself personally. But I do believe in the value and integrity of *Democracy Now* in bringing all this material to a wide audience.

I want to add an anecdote. The technician in our satellite truck is from Ohio and is certainly not an activist. He was floored by all the material he'd seen—both from *Democracy Now* and *Crashing the Party*. He called up his local affiliate and said, 'You have to run this stuff. We have to have all our communities watching this material. You'll not believe what they're doing there.' So there's a crossing of communities. And there's a hunger for this kind of alternative news.

Blumberg: I'm most proud of the fact that we're making these journalistic coups. It's not just that we're street activists; it's that we are good journalists. For instance, *Democracy Now* found a Republican delegate whose son is one of the street activists, and we brought them both into the studio for an interview. We also had a live interview with someone in jail on a cell phone, talking about people being brutalized in jail. And we brought Ralph Nader onto the convention floor.

The other thing I'm proud of is, when our show is working well, we're creating a very unique TV style. We're drawing from the style of *Democracy Now* as a radio show, then creating a TV show that has its own style that's different from Paper Tiger, and *The Five Day Bicycle Race*, and other public access shows.

Iannacone: And from Howard Stern.

Mainstream coverage of events outside the convention hall has been sketchy at best, and the demonstrators' issues have been glossed over. In this morning's *New York Times*, for example, the sole story about yesterday's street demonstrations said, "Protestors representing a score of causes . . . " without enumerating one. How are you handling the plethora of issues? Have you tried to single out certain themes or big stories?

Blumberg: One theme is corporate sponsorship of the convention, and also the treatment of the protestors on the street. There are also stories that are unrelated, really, to the business of the convention, but are things being stirred up by the fact that the convention is in town—like the exploitation of the mushroom harvesters in Pennsylvania.

Iannacone: They were there protesting on Monday.

Blumberg: Right, but *Democracy Now* is using the fact that this story has emerged here just to cover it as an issue. The fact that it's a two-hour show means that you can bring in five mushroom workers and for 20 minutes you can sit around and discuss their issues in depth. A lot of the mainstream media is a matter of vox pox and news headlines.

Iannacone: The main difference is that mainstream media sees the street activity as 'protestors.' They see it as one big umbrella, and the folks at *Democracy Now* are integrated enough into the community to know that they're not 'protestors,' they're a variety of protesting organizations and activists who have particular issues.

The first day there was the Kensington Welfare Rights March down the block that completely stopped traffic. I was walking down the street looking into the car windows at the completely annoyed people. The news media has that same response: annoyance. But that's why people do it—to annoy people, then to get people to listen. That's why you take to the streets—you need to get attention.

Blumberg: The strategy is to enrage and enlighten.

Iannacone: But to listen, too. The folks at *Democracy Now* and IMC know to go beyond the annoyance—to see it as the eye-opener, the bell that goes off at 6 a.m. that says you have to wake up, and then you listen to what the stories are.

Blumberg: There's no doubt there will be other coverage of these stories. *The Nation* and other publications will cover it, and there will be documentaries. But the great thing is we're doing it live, and it's contemporary. Between *Democracy Now* and *Crashing the Party*, there's three and a half hours a day going out, which gets the information out now.

The greatest hurdle still seems to be distribution. I tried to watch the program in Brooklyn and couldn't get it. I don't have a satellite dish, and the public access channels there didn't carry it. But this is not a unique situation. Alternative media routinely gets shunted to the back alley.

Blumberg: To a large extent, that's why I abandoned public access as an outlet, because if I'm going to work so hard on a project, I want to make sure millions of people see it.

Will the web be a way over this hurdle?

Iannacone: Actually, I think it's the hard work of publicity, outreach, and organizing that is our hurdle. We could have been on every public access station in this country if we had the money, the resources, and the time to do the outreach. The reason we weren't on Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) is because the day before our first broadcast, we found out that the satellite we planned to beam off of didn't have line of sight; there was a building in the way. So we had to switch to a new satellite and get the information out to all the public access stations.

Blumberg: GE screwed us up.

Iannacone: Yeah, GE screwed us up (*laughs*). Say that again!

Blumberg: GE had told us we had line of sight, but they were two degrees off.

Iannacone: The outreach staff did an amazing job, though, in that one night before our first broadcast at 8 a.m. on a Monday morning. We got on a lot of public access stations. Of course, it didn't get on in New York because of that quick turnaround. But two days later, an engineer at MNN installed a dish on the roof; unfortunately it also had a building in the way. I heard they're trying to get another dish on a higher building, so maybe they'll get the program the last day. So people are trying.

Blumberg: It's outreach, but it's also publicity, because you can be on the net, but unless people know it, they won't tune in. The Comedy Channel has a poster on every bus stop.

Iannacone: Money's a big issue. Ninety percent of the IMC people are working volunteer. If there was enough money to support the work, many more people would benefit from it. I see this whole thing as spreading the wealth. We're spreading the wealth of information, and if we had the wealth of a few dollars, we'd be able to do a better job.

Blumberg: Cheri Honkala said at a panel last night that the slave revolt didn't get delayed because they were looking for a foundation grant.



A video still from Earth First activists Tim Lewis and Tim Ream.

Iannacone: Here, here.

The idea of democratizing the media is as old as small-format video. Michael Shamberg's *Guerrilla TV* talked about it in 1971. We heard it again with the introduction of Hi-8, then DV, then the Internet. Is this a goal that's like the end of the rainbow—always receding with each step forward? Or has there been progress in the last 20 years?

Blumberg: Well, Free Speech TV is a real effort to provide an outlet and ownership of a 24-hour satellite channel. So that's a major breakthrough. But that's not to say it's an economic system that can *pay* producers for quality programming; that remains to be seen. Without sponsorship, it could end up being just another [chronically underfunded] PBS. PBS pays more than public access, but you're stuck with being on government grants. And as we know, when the Republicans came into Congress, they totally conservatized PBS. So it's hard to say what the future of Free Speech TV is. But right now, it's a very exciting beginning.

Iannacone: It's a continuing struggle to keep public access existing. Even so, there are public access centers that have an identity in the community, and people won't let them go, even though cable companies are trying to make them go away. Those elements are linking up. Like Free Speech TV and *Democacy Now*. Like local community organizing TV that's really grassroots, and independent filmmakers who aspire to be feature filmmakers who are working with IMC. I think that means there's a greater possibility for a democratic media.

For a listing and links to all IMC affiliates around the world, see www.indymedia.com

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

Students Unite

BY KYLE HENRY

Shortly after the Democratic convention wrapped up in August, hundreds of student activists headed up to the University of Oregon campus in Eugene to powwow about the future of the student movement that exploded in the wake of Seattle's WTO demonstrations. On the table were the questions "How are we doing and where do we go from here?" More specifically, the students met to plan the upcoming year's protest priorities and events.

Organized by two cutting-edge activist groups—United Students Against Sweatshops (UDSAS) and the 180 Movement for Democracy & Education—the five-day session was both a brainstorming event and a history lesson punctuated by presentations on how to use media to fight corporate power.

Providing historical context were reps from the old-guard, including Elizabeth Martinez from Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Paul Booth from Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and Ramona Africa from MOVE. But the vast majority were students between 18 and 30 years of age who are shaping the future of both organizations.

Kicking off the conference was Todd Price of public access station WYOU in Madison, Wisconsin, who presented a compilation of "video witnessing" from various activists of USAS struggles around the country. USAS began as a campaign against abusive conditions in the apparel industry. They successfully convinced over 57 campuses to join the Worker's Rights Consortium in attempting to enforce a code of conduct in the manufacture of university apparel based on no-sweat production. The struggle has not been easy, and for the first time since the sixties and seventies, widespread use of direct action (sit-ins, hunger strikes, lock-downs) has been used by students to force university officials to comply. The highlight of Price's footage included an investigation into the pepper-spraying of students at a University of Wisconsin sit-in.

On the low-tech end of media presentations was cartoonist/performance artist Seth Tobocman. Clicking through stark black and white slides, Tobocman shouted out the hidden history of the twentieth century in a 50-minute show titled "War in the Neighborhood" that covered the rise of the IMF/World Bank, the Tompkin's Square crack-down in New York City, and a philosophical tract on anarchistic struggles for democratic rule.

On the high-tech side were members of the Nike Behind the Label Tour, a group of students who traveled the country by van and invaded "Niketowns" to buttonhole company reps on Nike's infamous sweat-shop record. Their activities were documented on a web site [www.behind thelabel.org], **a high-tech info center featuring daily downloadable video clips, instant e-mail messaging to participants, and links to articles about the tour.**

The conference also featured a workshop on "Truth, Video Image, and Agitation Propaganda" by Earth First activists Tim Lewis and Tim Ream, whose video outfit is called Pickaxe Productions [www.pickaxe.org]. Their video RIP WTO N30 created some of the defining images of the Seattle protest. Along with other conference participants like Maria Cordera from Third Eye Movement [www.thirdeyemovement.org], Pickaxe has been involved in "cop-watch" programs using video to monitor and expose the growing police violence targeting youth. Like the folks at Independent Media Centers, students are turning the eye of surveillance culture back on itself.

With continual misrepresentation of the new student movement not likely to abate any time soon, conference attendants will make the trip back to campuses across the nation in the fall armed with new strategies of getting the word out onto the streets.

Kyle Henry, an invited speaker at the USAS/180 MDE Conference, produced the documentary University Inc., *which recently traveled to over 28 colleges as part of the McCollege Tour (www.mccollege.org).*

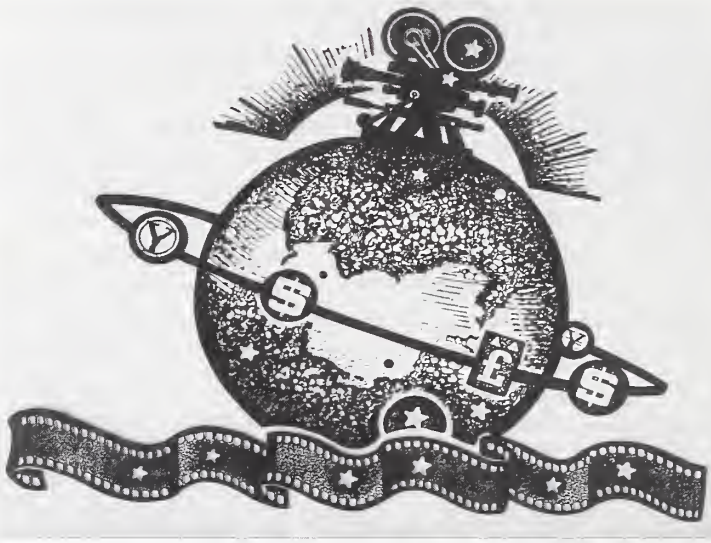
COURTESY FILMMAKERS

IS CONTENT KING?

The demise of Balfour Films and the State of the Foreign Sales Market

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

JANE BALFOUR FILMS, A WELL regarded, international distributor and sales agent for social issue documentaries and independent films, ceased operations in May. Balfour founded her London-based company in 1983, and has since represented hundreds of independent works from both sides of the Atlantic, with *Genghis Blues*, *First Person Plural,* and *Breathing Lessons* among her recent U.S. titles. She was a passionate advocate for independents. What does her company's failure mean? Is this an isolated problem or does it signal a major shift in the market?



Independent programs are being licensed abroad for shorter periods for less money.

International sales agents are the filmmaker's authorized representatives. They sell programs to foreign broadcast and cable channels. The agent earns commissions—typically 25-30%—on the sales they make. Direct expenses (dubbing and shipping masters) are charged to the producer. An agent's livelihood depends on their relationships with buyers and their ability to select films that will sell.

In the aftermath of Balfour's closure, Jan Rofekamp of Film Transit, an international sales agency, wrote this letter to those filmmakers whose films he feels he must reject:

> Since a few years we see a very clear development, and we have given that development a name. We call it *first* and *second* market.
>
> The first market are the TV sales that we make to the major free-to-air stations in each country. In each country there are only one, two, or maybe three first-market clients. In many cases, these are public TV stations, and many of them have a clear documentary buying policy. The revenues are fine, in the larger countries even quite nice. The first market has always been there, and although it is more and more competitive and harder to get sales there, it will remain there. But what we see now very clearly is that the sales in the first market are quickly going down. It forces us to get even better, more competitive and higher profile films.
>
> The second market is the emerging cable and satellite market of what we call the new 'specialty' channels. This market needs a lot of docs. There is a big advantage and a big disadvantage.
>
> The advantage is that this new second market is extending the documentary's life. Where in the past we made one sale to one country, we now can make many more sales in the same territory during a longer period of time by making use of shorter windows, thus getting filmmakers longer-term income. Many second-market clients are willing to allow short exclusivity periods.
>
> The disadvantage, however, is that the second market pays relatively little. The minimums are around $500 per hour and the maximum are $2,000 to $3,000 per hour. That means that we have to make a lot of sales to make this really worthwhile, as you can figure out that the commissions one needs to run a business on are just too low.
>
> Our problem is that we *have* to find films that are sellable in the first market, as second market *alone* is economically not feasible. Our films play in the first market only to be groomed to be very good second market films later and on the long term. We feel that your film is more of a second market film and therefore we have to say no. We could expand, hire more people, take on more films, and see if the second market is worthwhile, but, to be frank, we are not that interested in that expansion.
>
> We realize that this is a bit of a grim outlook for films that are absolutely not necessarily bad films. I am sure you heard of Jane Balfour Film's liquidation. This demise has a lot to do with too many small sales against the expensive overhead of our trade.

Balfour did not respond to *The Independent*'s requests for an interview. However, Rofekamp did comment more directly on her company's demise, saying, "Jane had a lot of films. She thought that the second market was the solution. It turned out to be very labor intensive— packing and shipping to the second markets. She had to increase her staff and her overhead."

Charles Schuerhoff, an international sales agent, concurs. "Jane Balfour simply had too many films that didn't sell." Regarding Rofekamp's letter, he says. "I think Jan is correct for his company or my company, which has to survive on the short end of the percentage, [and] the cost of executing a sale can exceed the revenue from the sale. In some cases, it doesn't make sense to make the sale at all. We usually do them, though, because every sale

doesn't have to make us money."

Schuerhoff agrees as well that the market has changed. One reason is because "there has been an increase in the number of cable broadcasters with an appetite for hour-long documentary programming—though they're unwilling to pay very much," he says. "And there has been an increase in activity by the sales arms of channels such as the History Channel and the Discovery Channel, which are making a concerted effort to sell their programming to similar ventures overseas or to their subsidiaries," like Discovery Europe.

Rofekamp confirms this trend. "A lot of in-house production is being done. There's also a lot of industrial documentary production from the cable channels that is being dumped. I call it 'junk food documentary.' [The only consolation is] occasionally broadcasters need an award-winner [and come to us] so they can go to the press."

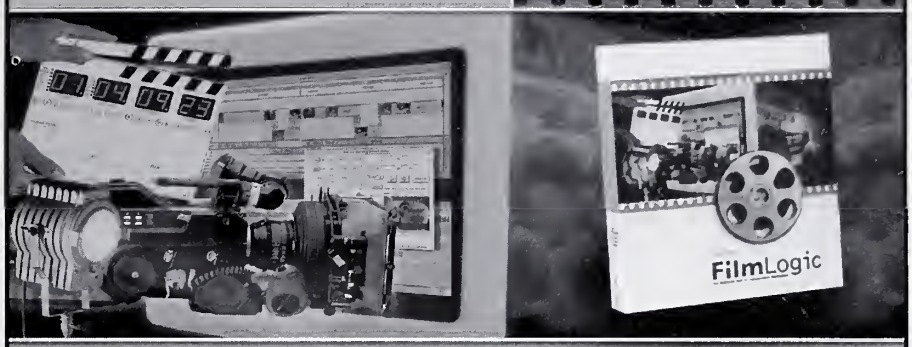
Anne Makepeace, whose films *Baby It's You* and *Coming to Light* were handled by Balfour, has a harsher name for this kind of documentary product. "The markets abroad are going in the direction of trash. Most channels are not interested in quality. There's more demand but not for quality."

The competition from cable has forced broadcasters to change their strategy. "Channel Four and BBC Worldwide are pushing hard to control more programs," Schuerhoff notes. "All these companies are trying to become bigger players in the market. To grab market share, they're willing to structure output deals for low license fees on a per hour basis. In major markets, the buyers have a greater tendency to produce and own programming. That means there are fewer slots open for independent programs, because [the broadcasters] are producing more and buying less. Hence, there are more sales for smaller amounts and fewer large sales. Most sales are below $2,000 per hour."

The impact of this shift is clear when you consider the financial implications for independent filmmakers trying to tap the European market. Today, according to Rofekamp, "The first market has a potential of $250,000 to $600,000. The second market: $50,000." An average one-hour film generates $250,000 to $350,000 if it sells well in major overseas markets. Films

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Case Study I: A Typical Documentary Release

This case study is based on interviews with four filmmakers and six distributors, and provides an estimate of the revenue stream for a "typical" one-hour social issue documentary.

Production costs	**$300,000**	
Foundation grants	$100,000	
Deferrals	$130,000	
Personal loans	$ 70,000	
Liabilities (at risk)		**(–$200,000)**

Festival Distribution **(–$10,000)**
Accepted in a major festival (e.g., Sundance, Toronto, Berlin, Amsterdam). Filmmaker has to pay for travel, festival publicist, promotional materials, and a party, which may amount to $10,000. In our example, though there's some distributor interest, ultimately none makes an offer. However, film subsequently gets invited to six other festivals. Filmmaker gets entry fee waived, is lauded, but receives no money. The pay-off is in getting an international sales agent and new contacts for future projects.

Domestic theatrical distribution **(–$1,000)**
Filmmaker foots the bill for a one-week qualifying run for the Academy Awards. Fee covers one matinee showing per day for seven days on one of the Laemmle Theaters' screens and inclusion in Laemmle ad to meet Academy qualifications. Qualifies, but doesn't receive a nomination.

U.S. Television Sales		
PBS	$30,000	
$525/min.for nat'l broadcast, e.g. P.O.V.		
Costs	(–$3,500)	
Close captioning, E&O insurance, etc.		
Filmmaker's net		$28,000
U.S. Educational Sales (over 3 years)		
Educational distributor's gross	$32,000	
Filmmaker's net (25% of gross)		$ 8,000
International Television Sales		
Gross sales	$60,000	
Sales agent commission (30%)	(–$18,000)	
Expenses (5%)	(–$3,000)	
Filmmaker's net		$39,000
Home Video Sales		
Gross sales:	$74,850	
3,000 copies @ $24.95 retail		
Distributor net	$37,425	
Filmmaker's net (18% of distributor net)		$ 6,737
Filmmaker's Gross		**$81,737**
Deficit (outstanding liabilities)		**(–$130,763)**

— Robert M. Goodman

that exceed the average are those that receive an Academy Award nomination or win prizes at the major festivals, like Berlin. For the past year, Film Transit has been holding two films off the market, in order to qualify them for the Academy Awards. A nomination can easily triple the value of a film.

Independent programs are also being licensed for shorter periods for less money, as Rofekamp pointed out in his letter. Asked for an example, he relates his recent experiences with England's first-market stations. "The typical licensing deal used to be £50,000 for three years. Then, the typical deal was £12,000 for one-year. And now even that is being cut. I've received recent offers which are for £5,000 for one run in eight months. The problem is you can't sell it again in that [broadcast] market, [so you've lost that revenue forever]."

Increased competition is also having an impact on what kind of work sells. As Schuerhoff observes, "the subject matter—what buyers will consider—is narrowing. In general, independent programs are required to match up more closely with series. Buyers are less able to take the odd one-off docs. There are fewer ad hoc series [e.g., the BBC's *Window on the World*]. Those series simply aren't around anymore. Ratings have become more important. Broadcasters need to establish a brand identity, and there is no money to promote documentaries. The subject needs to guarantee an audience and the title alone must publicize the subject."

Rofekamp concurs that titles are important and also stresses that technical quality has become critical. "The bar has been lifted upward because of HDTV. Sloppy miniDV films are completely over. Today, even one audio dropout is enough [for the buyers] to reject the film. We look for promotable subjects, anything universally compelling—one liners that attract attention."

"Major broadcasters are less willing and less able to take risks and promote documentaries. They can't throw away any slots anymore," Schuerhoff explains. As a consequence, "We are less able to take pro-

ERRATUM

In Robert Goodman's DV transfer article in the Aug./Sept. issue of *The Independent*, Robert Crites should have been credited as photographer. We regret the error.

grams we like because the odd one-off doc is too hard to place."

To survive, in Rofekamp's view, sales agents must concentrate on the major markets and on films that are saleable in those markets. He advises filmmakers to send their programs to sales agents and then, "If it's not a first market film, filmmakers can conduct their own email campaign to the forty key buyers and promote their film on the festival circuit. After that the second market is the only avenue. [Sadly,] the potential revenue in the second market is maybe $20,000."

We wondered if Rofekamp has abandoned the second market. He replies, "I think if you can manage second market sales efficiently, it can still make sense to do those sales. I've always put [it] on the back burner. I appoint subagents to do some of the second market sales because it's more efficient."

He has also changed his sales strategy in this market. "I used to send thirty tapes to a cable station. Then after six months, they'd call me and say 'we'll buy two.' Now, twice a year, I sell a package of twenty films to the second market. They can take the entire package or leave it. The licensing fee may be only $1,700 a film but multiplied by twenty, the sale is enough to make it worthwhile for us."

Schuerhoff echoes Rofekamp's position, saying, "The cost of servicing the small sale is the same as a big sale. We must try to keep a sensible balance."

In the end, perhaps Jane Balfour was too passionate and too desirous for the filmmakers she represented. As a result, she lost sight of her own need to maintain the balance necessary to make a profit and stay in business. Her loss is a loss for us all.

The documentary market remains forever in flux. The needs of public broadcasters and major cable networks, who are principal customers for independent documentaries, change with every acquisition and after each broadcast. The explosion of cable and satellite channels we've witnessed in the United States is spreading throughout the globe. No one can accurately gauge this volatile market with any degree of certitude. But the trend for the next few years seems evident in Rofekamp's letter and Balfour's fate.

Robert Goodman [goodman@histories.com] is an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director based in Philadelphia.

Case Study II:
Hoop Dreams: The Ultimate Success Story

Kartemquin Productions' *Hoop Dreams*, released in 1994, remains the highest grossing nonmusical documentary ever released. As Fredrick Marx, one of the producers, states, "*Hoop Dreams* was a home run." But even with a gross of over $17 million, ultimately just one-tenth of that came back to the filmmakers to split.

Production costs	**$515,000**	
CPB Grant	$375,000	
Deferrals	$140,000	
Liabilities (at risk)		**(–$140,000)**
Festival Distribution		
Figure above includes 16mm print for festival distribution. Film premiered at Sundance and won Audience Award for Best Documentary. Worldwide rights picked up by Fine Line. Term: 15 years (N. America only), all media except print.		
Domestic theatrical distribution		
North American gross	$8,200,000	
Fine Line's net	$2,790,000	
Filmmaker's advance		$400,000
Income beyond advance		$279,000
Expenses charged to filmmaker		(–$220,000)
Includes re-edit ($10K), D1 online ($20K), stereo mix ($15K); tape to film ($50K), music rights ($50K), legal fees ($50K), deliverables ($10K), overhead ($15K).		
International gross (*including TV*)	$757,000	
Advance to filmmaker		$500,000
Domestic Television		
PBS (3-year rights)	$0 because of CPB grant	
TNT cable broadcast rights	$625,000	
Fine Line distribution fee (30%)	(–$187,500)	
Distributor out-of-pocket expenses	(–$375,000)	
Incl. those not recouped on theatrical run.		
Advance (10% by contract)		$62,500
Educational Distribution	$0	
Home Video Sales		
Gross sales:	$8,011,444	
Filmmaker's net (10%)	$801,144	
Book Rights		
Filmmaker's advance		$250,000
Total Gross to Date	**$17,593,444**	
Filmmaker's Gross	**$2,292,644**	
Producer's Rep (10%)	(–$229,264)	
Deferrals	(–$140,000)	
Expenses	(–$220,000)	
FILMMAKERS' NET		**$1,703,380**

The filmmakers' split of net:		
Producers	(3@9.5%)	$485,463
Star players	(2@9.5%)	$323,642
Player's families	(2@9.5%)	$323,642
Schools	(2@1.5%)	$ 51,102
Others (1% divided by screen time)		$17,034
Kartemquin Productions (9.5%)		$161,821
KTCA	(20%)	$340,676

— Robert M. Goodman, figures provided by Frederick Marx

NEW DAY FILMS



From Karina Epperlein's *Voices From Inside*.

New Day Films, 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (201) 652-6590; fax: 652-1973; orders@newday.com; www.newday.com
Contact: Tommie Smith, Chair, New Day Films Steering Committee; Theresa Tollini, Inquires Coordinator

BY LISSA GIBBS

What is New Day Films?
New Day Films is a national distribution cooperative of independent filmmakers who make social issue films. We distribute mainly to colleges and universities, libraries, high schools, and community groups.

Who is New Day?
We are 70 award-winning filmmakers from across the United States who have made the 100+ films in the New Day collection and who run the co-op. Currently, the co-op chair is Tommie Dell Smith (*Breaking Silence: The Story of the Sisters of Desales Heights*). Other members of the New Day Steering Committee are: Jay Rosenstein (*In Whose Honor?*); Susan Stern (*Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour*); Debra Chasnoff (*It's Elementary: Taking About Gay Issues in the Classroom*), and Jane Gillooly (*Leona's Sister Gerri*).

Total number of employees at New Day:
There are three paid staff members: Karen Knox, of Transit Media in New Jersey, who takes orders, ships films, sends members detailed monthly statements and maintains our database; and Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, consultants from Seattle, who facilitate New Day meetings, help resolve problems, and maintain records. New Day members, under the guidance of the steering committee, do the work of running the co-op.

How, when, and why did New Day come into being?
New Day was founded in 1971 by four East Coast filmmakers who were tired of being told their films were "too feminist" for the marketplace. They met at the Flaherty Seminar and set about proving the critics wrong. "We could watch the women's movement spread across the country just by who was ordering our films," said co-founder Julia Reichert. Soon, the co-op expanded to not just feminist, but progressive films, such as co-founders Reichert and Jim Klein's *Seeing Red*, a profile of the Old Left in the United States.



Striking laundry workers in *Union Maids*, by Julia Reichert, Jim Klein, and Miles Mogulescu

How are business decisions made at New Day?
The filmmaker members make decisions at an annual meeting each summer. They also elect the Steering Committee, which makes decisions between annual meetings.

What distinguishes you from other distributors?
New Day is unique because it is run by its filmmakers. That means its filmmakers can make more money than with a commercial distributor. Currently, active New Day members keep an average of 67% of their gross income. With most commercial distributors, the filmmaker gets 20% of the gross. To reap this high income, New Day members have to share the work of joint distribution of their films. Besides this financial payoff, they also get to be part of a close community of 70 independent filmmakers, often sharing contacts, information, equipment, talent, knowledge and support.

Unofficial motto:
We're in this together.

What would people be most surprised to learn about New Day?

A contact sheet shows the symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome in Laurel Chitren's *Twitch and Shout*.





From Pat Ferrero's *Hopi: Song of the Fourth World*

We give great parties. Our web page with online catalog was up in 1996.

How many titles are in the collection?
There are currently 138 New Day titles.

Films you distribute:
Tell the Truth and Run: George Seldes and the American Press; With Babies and Banners; Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour; Growing Up Female; Bubbeh Lee and Me; Song of the Canary; and *Twitch and Shout.* Some filmmakers: Jim Klein, Ralph Arlyck, Pat Ferrero, Mark Lipman, Debra Chasnoff, Laurel Chiten, Robert Richter, J Clements, Walter Brock, and Debra Franco.

What type of works do you distribute?
We're looking for new, high quality films and videos about social issues. Most of our titles are documentaries, but we have fictional and experimental works that deal with social issues. We have no restrictions on content, style, or length.

What drives you to acquire the titles you do?
We look at both film and filmmaker. We want films that deeply, intelligently, and artistically explore social issues. We also want a filmmaker who can responsibly work in a co-op.

How is your collection organized?
Our titles fall into such categories of Multiculturalism and Diversity; Social and Political History; Gender and Socialization; Media, Art and Culture; Physical and Mental Health; Parenting and Family; and Global Concerns.

Best known title at New Day:
Some of our "best known" titles are: *Barbie Nation; The Jew In the Lotus; It's Elementary: Taking About Gay Issues in School; Union Maids; Seeing Red;* and *With Babies and Banners.*

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
All titles immediately go up on our web site, with online credit card ordering. New titles are promoted through our customer newsletters, annual catalog, trade shows, and brochure and post card direct mailings. New Day Films holds distribution rights to the domestic, educational market. However, you can almost always find one or more New Day Films at any prestigious film festival, conference, or screening.

How should a filmmaker approach New Day for consideration?
If you are interested in being part of New Day, contact Theresa Tollini, our Inquires Coordinator, for a membership brochure and an application form. Theresa can be reached at (415) 332-7172 or by e-mail at FEFilms@pacbell.net. Or go to our web page to find out more. We don't look at works-in-progress.

Describe your relationship with the makers you represent:
As Theresa Tollini (*Breaking Silence, Stories of Change, Still Missing*) puts it, "New Day members are open, receptive and supportive of one another." And Ralph Arlyck (*An Acquired Taste, Current Events, Godzilla Meets Mona Lisa*) says, "For me, New Day is a crucial lifeline to other independent filmmakers."

An advantage of self-distribution is that . . .
you can make more money and with New Day you join a community of filmmakers.

A disadvantage of self distribution is that . . .
you have no one to blame but yourself.

Biggest change at New Day in recent years:
Thanks to a hard-working group of members known as the "Web Team," we have a terrific web site loaded with information that is widely used by our customers. They also maintain our email system which allows us to communicate very effectively, making it remarkably easy to conduct business with our large group spread all across the country.

The most important issue facing New Day:
Today the world is driven by rapidly evolving technologies which will undoubtedly continue to affect our methods of communication with our audiences and our methods of delivery. We appreciate the efficiencies that new developments in production technologies have

PHOTOS COURTESY NEW DAY FILMS.9 THIS PAGE, TOP PHOTO: OWEN SEUMPTEWA



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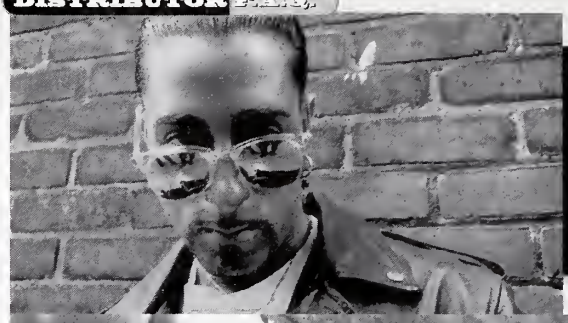
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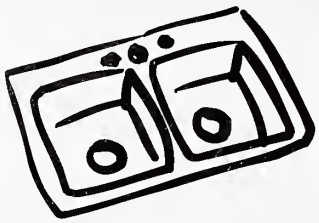
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afforded us, and we're looking forward to embracing new ways of delivery as they become available.

Where will New Day be in 10 years?

I expect New Day to be pretty much where it is now—a relatively small, but very successful distributor of high-quality, independent, social issue media that enjoys a close and respected relationship with its audiences. Over the past 30 years, New Day has continued to get stronger and, at this moment, there is every indication that this trend will continue.

The biggest issue facing social issue media making and distribution is . . .

that so much media is available today that I think audiences are overwhelmed with input, much of it mindless "entertainment." As independent film- and videomakers who are committed to media as a vehicle for social change, our challenge is to continue to find ways to stand out above the crowd and to reach those for whom our work is a valuable tool.

Other distributors you admire:

California Newsreel and Women Make Movies.

One bit of advice to independent filmmakers:

Perhaps the most important thing I've learned as a self-distributor is the importance of knowing your audience. Approach the entire filmmaking process with the idea of how it will be used and by whom.

Upcoming New Day titles:

Award winning filmmaker Laurel Chiten's *The Jew in the Lotus* which follows author Roger Kamenetz's intense personal journey that leads him back to his Jewish roots when he travels to meet with the Dalai Lama; *Poetic License* by David Yanofsky, a riveting portrayal of teenage poets from across the country competing for the Teen Poetry Slam championships; Robert Richter's new film, *Father Roy and the School of Assassins*, which chronicles the story of a Catholic priest who has devoted his life to shutting down the School of the Americas, the U.S. military academy which has trained Central American death squads.

Famous last words:

For me (Tommie Smith), being a member of New Day Films has been a profoundly rewarding experience both professionally and personally. Where else could I freely share ideas and information with so many of America's most important filmmakers, while at the same time lending my own knowledge and experience to talented new filmmakers just beginning their careers.

Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o The Independent, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013; or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

PHOTO: JOAN MANDELL; OPPOSITE: PHOTOS COURTESY NEH

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

BY MICHELLE COE



Program officers David Weinstein, Karen Miles, Virginia Field, Tom Phelps, Michael Shirley, Pam Elder

NEH Media Program, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Room 426, Washington, D.C. 20506; (202) 606-8279; www.neh.gov; Contacts: Virginia Field, David Weinstein

What is the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and why did it come into being?
The NEH is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1965. As the largest funder of humanities programs in the United States, the NEH awards grants to institutions that create and preserve knowledge, enrich classroom learning, expand humanities content on the Internet, and bring ideas to life through public television and radio, museum exhibitions, and programs in libraries and other community places. NEH's current budget allocation from Congress is $115 million.

The driving philosophy behind the NEH is . . .
to advance knowledge in the humanities, defined as history, literature, philosophy, and foreign cultures, and to foster understanding of the important role of the humanities in American life. The humanities offer insight into human values, traditions, ideals, thoughts, and actions by examining the human experience in systematic and reflective ways.

How has the funding climate for independent media changed since the inception of the NEH in 1965?
Since its inception, the NEH has awarded nearly a quarter of a billion dollars for media projects. However, the average size of our grants decreased after Congress mandated cutbacks in fiscal year 1995. The average grant was approximately $263,000 in FY 1995 and $149,000 in FY 2000.

Since we require all submissions to come through non-profit organizations, individual media artists sometimes approach us through public broadcasting stations or umbrella organizations such as Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. Of 42 media grants awarded in FY 2000, approximately 70% went to independent producers, including a few who worked through stations, and the remainder went for films produced by public television stations.

How have the political climate changes affected your budget or structure?
Even with reduced funds, we respond to the needs of producers. For example, in 1999, after meeting with independent filmmakers, we added Consultation Grants. These awards, up to $10,000, aid projects at an early stage of development. The grants have two deadlines a year and we are able to notify applicants about whether they receive funding relatively quickly. More broadly, the NEH supports documentaries from preproduction through postproduction to the development of digital enhancements for completed films.

What percentage of the NEH overall budget goes towards individual film or video projects?
Of NEH funds allocated for Public Programs, over 50% support media projects.

What types of projects does the NEH seek?
The *sine qua non* here is great storytelling combined with active collaboration between academic and media experts. It's a marriage that requires give and take for both professions, but the end result can represent the best of both worlds. For the most part, we rely on the creativity and imagination of filmmakers throughout the country to bring us good ideas, but over the years we have occasionally conducted special thematic initiatives on topics such as children's programming, the Bicentennial of the Revolution, the Bicentennial of the Constitution, American identity, and the millennium.

What defines a "project in the humanities" and thereby qualifies a project for the NEH?
We fund creative films that explore ideas analytically. We expect films developed with our support to have a strong team of advisors, to appeal to a broad, national audience, and to present a balanced perspective.

Collaboration with scholars is another key requirement. At what stage must these people be in place, and to what degree are they involved in a project?
Close and meaningful collaboration between the producer and the scholarly team should begin early and continue throughout the project. The Endowment has made a deep and lasting contribution to documentary film by fostering collaborations between media producers and humanities scholars.

How do you qualify scholars?
Most advisors have advanced degrees in the humanities, hold university appointments, and have written books and articles in their field. We also recognize people who have gained expertise through non-academic life experiences.

Generally, producing teams with track records are funded over emerging filmmakers. What kind of experience does your "typical" awardee have? What advice do you give producers who have less experience but worthy projects?
The typical awardee is an experienced PBS documentary producer. Less experienced applicants find it advantageous to link up with a seasoned media team. We have also developed Consultation Grants of up to $10,000 to help less experienced producers get a foot in the NEH door. Consultation Grants have a much higher success rate than other categories.

What are the script requirements? How do you advise documentary filmmakers who do not begin projects with scripts?
All production proposals require either a script or a detailed treatment. The proposal should contain sufficient information about the intellectual content and visual style to convince a panel that it is worthwhile.

Are there particular items in the budget guidelines that producers should be aware of, i.e. wage standards, owning vs. renting equipment, etc.?
In general, we require that all guild and/or union rates be respected. The Endowment discourages equipment purchases [using NEH funds] unless applicants can make a case that such purchases will save the government money. So, for example, a producer usually cannot use an NEH grant to purchase an edit system. For detailed information, check out our budget guidelines and specific labor regulations, available from the NEH.

Are there time frame restrictions within which the funds must be used?
The time frame varies for each project. The average duration for Consultation is 3-6 months; for Planning and/or Scripting, 6-12 months; and for Production, 2-3 years.

Can the same individual apply two years in a row?
Yes. Producers may even revise a proposal and resubmit it.

Can individuals apply for different grants for the same project?
Yes, but not while one application is under review. If a producer has several projects, he or she may submit applications for each project. Along these lines, we don't require applicants to apply for early support if they believe they are ready for production funding. A project may receive a production grant, for example, without having been awarded a scripting grant.

What is the NEH Extending the Reach program?
It's a new initiative to provide resources for creative humanities programming, education, and preservation efforts in 15 jurisdictions: Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Texas,

Manhattan's canyons of light as seen in Ric Burns' series on the history of *New York*.





Washington, and Wyoming. People in these areas historically have not benefited as fully as others have from NEH programs. Producers from all 50 states may receive Consultation Grants, but special consideration is given to applications from the designated areas.

Who makes the awards decisions?

Approximately 30 media artists participate in the NEH review process each year. We recruit nationally and look for panelists who bring different perspectives to our peer review process. Panels from the past couple of years have included such people as Victoria Westermark, Paul Espinosa, Juanita Anderson, Muffie Meyer, Sarah Patton, Jennifer Lawson, Bob Seidman, Leslie Lee, Ray Telles, Lisa Heller, and Carma Hinton.

Tell us a little about the review process.

All proposals are reviewed by panels comprised of scholars and media professionals. Next steps include review by staff, the National Council on the Humanities, and the Endowment's Chairman, William Ferris, who, by law, is authorized to make the award.

What are primary criteria for judging projects? Do they center more on academic content or filmmaking approach?

We're looking for a balance of strong academic content and good visual storytelling. We instruct our panelists to give both areas equal weight. Beyond that, we want NEH-supported films to reach diverse audiences and have national impact.

NEA FY 2000 [figures vary annually]

Type of Grant	# applicants	# funded	Avg project grant size	Maximum grant size	Total awarded	2001 deadlines
Consultation	50	17	$9,834	$10,000	$167,187	April 16 & Sept. 11
Planning	49	15	$35,292	$30,000	$529,379	February 1
Scripting	30	1	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	February 1
Production	62	10	$541,068	$800,000	$5,410,676	February 1

Name some of the best known titles and/or artists you have funded. What have been some of the distribution/exhibition) paths of those projects?
With such ground-breaking historical documentaries as *The Civil War* (Ken Burns), *The Great Depression* (Henry Hampton), and contributions to PBS's *The American Experience*, the NEH has helped to create an appetite for nonfiction television. A turning point in historical documentary filmmaking occurred with *The Civil War*, in which figures from the past spoke directly to contemporary viewers through archival materials, contemporary scholarship, location shooting, and powerful storytelling techniques. The tradition of strong scholarship and good storytelling continues with Barak Goodman and Daniel Anker's *Scottsboro: An American Tragedy* and Anne Makepeace's *Coming to Light: Edward C. Curtis*, both of which premiered at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival and are scheduled to air on PBS within the next year. Most of our films air on PBS, but we allow other distribution paths as well.

It's commonly believed that the NEH docs are "traditional" in their style and format. Can you give some examples of more experimental work?
Good question. The NEH favors projects with strong narratives and high production values. Having said this, many projects that were considered "experimental" or risky when they received Endowment funds have since been widely emulated and are now considered "traditional." We are always looking for creative filmmakers who will deliver the sort of content the NEH is known for while advancing the documentary genre. Several NEH-funded films—including *Liberty* (Muffie Meyer and Ellen Hovde for KTCA-TV), *The Great War* (Blaine Baggett for KCET-TV), *Divided Highways* (Tom Lewis and Larry Hott), *A Midwife's Tale* (Laurie Kahn-Leavitt), and *Cathedral* (Larry Kline and Mark Olshaker)—have made innovative use of music, editing, animation, narration, and dramatic recreation. There are also a few "experimental" films in production, such as Eric Spenge's *The Murder of Dr. Parkman* and Andrea Kalin's *Partners of the Heart*.

Once a producer is funded, what are the financial requirements of the NEH?
Detailed instructions appear in our guidelines, but people should know a couple of things up front. The NEH requires a sound financial management system and if the grant is over $300,000 for one fiscal year, an audit must be performed.

Is it true that an NEH-funded project cannot accept funding from foundations without prior approval?
Quite the contrary. We encourage producers to approach a range of funders, as it's unlikely that we can support the full costs of a single or series of programs.

What are the "pay-back" requirements for NEH-funded projects that net a sizeable income (e.g., Ken Burns' *The Civil War*)?
In the event that the grantee earns over $50,000 within seven years after the film is completed, we require that the federal share of program income be returned to the Endowment.

Are the officers open to phone calls while producers are preparing their applications?
We encourage potential applicants to call any one of us. We are happy to discuss applications in progress.

Who are the Program Officers?
Pam Elder, Virginia Field, Karen Miles, Tom Phelps, Mike Shirley, and David Weinstein.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
We have several tips: First, a producer needs a well-reasoned story outline combined with a strong belief in the project. Another critical aspect is to align the project with the purpose and goals of the NEH. Define the target audience. Conceive of the budget along industry standards. It's also essential to know the endowment's requirements for each category of funding. The NEH publishes extensive proposal guidelines (also available on the web). Sample applications as well as a list of previously funded projects are available upon request. It seems like common sense, but sometimes people forget who we are, what we need to know from an applicant, and the types of projects that we fund.

What's the most common mistake applicants make?
Media producers sometimes neglect to form an equal partnership with scholars and experts. As a result, panelists find that their applications do not have a strong enough humanities component.

What would people be most surprised to learn about the NEH and/or its founders?
This small government agency is accessible and responsive to ideas from all filmmakers. We are a user-friendly funder. A big part of our work centers on education and feedback. We offer suggestions at the preliminary stage and try to anticipate questions that might come up in the review process. After the decisions are made, producers can ask for and receive the panelists' comments on their projects.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire and why.
We see ourselves as part of a community that provides visions of a complex and diverse world to national audiences. We admire all foundations who do this humanistic work.

Famous last words:
"Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens" (from the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965).

Funder FAQ profiles a wide range of funders of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF

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BY SCOTT CASTLE

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DOMESTIC

ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL, March 13-18, MI. Deadline: Dec. 1. All cats & genres of independent filmmaking accepted in this fest of 16mm film w/ either optical soundtrack or silent. Seminars & workshops held for filmmakers at fest, one of the oldest independent film events in country. Awarded films & highlights programmed into 4-hr program that tours colleges & film showplaces across U.S. for 9 months following fest, w/ rental fee of $2/min. per tour stop paid to filmmakers. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: $16,000 in cash prizes awarded. Foreign entries should have subtitles. Formats: 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC) & 16mm. Entry fee: $35. Contact: AAFF, Vicky Honeyman Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (734) 995-5356; fax: 995-5396; vicki@honeyman.org; www.aafilm fest.org

BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nat'l tour, Jan.-May, NJ. Deadline: Mid. Nov. Fest seeks to "identify, exhibit & reward compelling new ind. media, reach audiences in a wide variety of settings nationwide & advocate exceptional achievement that expands the expressive terrain of film & video." Fest founded in 1980 in honor of Thomas A. Edison, who developed motion picture medium & whose film studio, the Black Maria in West Orange, NJ, was the world's first. No category-related restrictions. Fest is looking for any combination of inventive, incisive, responsive & provocative work of any style or genre. Featured works screened at over 50 venues throughout U.S. & Canada. Program also cablecast to 250,000 subscribers. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 3 1/2 yrs & may be up to 90 min. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: Jurors' Choice Works (share $2,500); Jurors' Citation Works (share $2,000); Directors' Choice Works (share $1,000); plus $5,000+ in exhibition honoraria. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (shorts); $45 (features). Contact: BMFVF, John Columbus, Fest Dir., Dept. of Media Arts, Jersey City State College, 203 West Side Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07305; (201) 200-2043; fax: 200-3490; blackmariafest@aol.com; www.ellserver1.njcu.edu/TAEBMFF/; www.neobmff.com

BOSTON UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 22-24, MA. Deadlines: Dec. 15 (early); Jan. 14 (final). 3rd annual fest of the devious, depraved & defiant. Looking for films that are radical & experimental in either content or production value. Cats: doc, short, animation & experimental. Awards: Bacchus Bunny Awards will be given in the following cats: Best of Festival, Most Offensive, Most Experimental, Best Narrative, Best Non-Narrative, and an Audience Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 1/2" (NTSC & PAL), 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: early, $35 (features, over 60 min.); $15 (shorts, under 60 min.); late, $40 (features); $20 (shorts). Contact: BUFF, 441 Washington St. #2, Brookline, MA 02446; (617) 975-3361; localsightings@worldnet.att.net; www.localsightings.com

CHICAGO ASIAN AMERICAN SHOWCASE, April, IL. Deadline: Nov. 30. Chicago's annual Asian American film/arts festival, presented by the Foundation for Asian American Independent Cinema & The Gene Siskel Film Center. Seeking features, shorts, docs & videos by &/or about Asian Americans. Send preview tape, bio/production notes, still photo & s.a.s.e. for tape return. Cats: feature, doc, short. No awards, non-competitive. Formats: all formats. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $10 (payable to FAAIM). Contact: CAAS, c/o FAAIM, Box 5435, Chicago, IL 60680. (773) 562-6265; fax: 384-6463; info@faaim.org; www.faaim.org

CROSSROADS FILM FESTIVAL, April 6-9, MS. Deadline: Dec. 31; Feb. 14 (late). Fest's goal is to provide Mississippi and the Southeast with a forum for independent films & filmmakers from around the world, showcasing film as a vital contribution toward the cultural, educational & economical vitality of the community and region. Cats: feature, doc, short, student, music video, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Hi-8, Beta SP, Beta, 3/4", DV, PixelVision. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $45 (feature); $25 (short, 35 min. or less); $10 (student); add $10 after Dec. 31. Contact: CFF, Box 22604, Jackson, MS 39225; (601) 352-5230; questions@crossroadsfilmfest.com; www.crossroadsfilmfest.com

DOUBLETAKE DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, May 3-6, NC. Deadlines: Dec. 28 (regular); Jan. 8 (late). 4th annual event seeks recent creative documentary work to screen at the premier documentary fest in N. America. Fest offers diverse programming that combines established & new documentarians, and offering these filmmakers & all guests, a relaxing, intimate atmosphere. Competition films are eligible for the Jury Award, Audience Award & the Center for Doc Studies First Film Prize. Docs must have been completed after January 1, 1999 & be no more than 180 min. in length. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Digibeta, Beta. Preview on VHS (NTSC preferred). Entry fees: $35 (regular); $50 (late). Entry form available online. Contact: DTDFF, Karen Cirillo, 1317 W. Pettigrew St., Durham, NC 27705; (919) 660-3699; fax: 681-7600; ddff@duke.edu; www.ddff.org

FILM FEST NEW HAVEN, April 27-29, CT. Deadlines: Dec. 1 (early); Jan. 10 (final). 6th annual, broadly focused, independent, int'l fest, screening works of innovative filmmakers. More than 65 films (shorts & feature length, film & video) at three venues (incl. Yale University's Film Study Center). New Haven, CT is a sophisticated small city w/ a diverse, film-literate audience, located well for the film industry between N.Y. & Boston. Awards: Jury, Audience & Cinematography awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30 (early); $40 (final). Contact: FFNH, Box 9644, New Haven, CT 06536; (203) 776-6789; fax: 481-6789; info@filmfest.org; www.filmfest.org

FILM FLEADH: IRISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 1-4, NY. Deadline: Dec. 1. 3rd annual fest open to films made in Ireland, or by an Irish filmmaker, or by a filmmaker of Irish descent living outside Ireland, or w/ an Irish theme. All genres accepted in the following cats: feature, short, doc, experimental, animation. Screenplay competition open to an Irish or Irish-American writer or writer(s) of Irish descent living outside of Ireland. Scripts must be over 80 pages & don't need to be Irish themed to be accepted. Cash awards to feature, short & screenplay winners. Films produced since 1993 eligible for official selection. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (film); $30 (screenplay). Contact: FFIIFF, Terence Mulligan, Fest Dir., 29 Greene St, New York, NY 11228; (212) 966-3030 x. 247; fax: 965-9520; Filmfleadh@aol.com; www.FilmFleadh.com

FIRSTGLANCE: PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, PA. Deadline: Dec. 15. Fest encourages student & profesional film- and videomakers w/ any budget for underground, alternative event whose mission is to exhibit all genres of work, from mainstream to controversial, in



(l to r) Filmmakers Augustine Ma, Julie Cho, Stephen Bai, Greg Pak, Donna Tsufura, and Marie Chao at the fest's Opening Night.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

Having presented such groundbreaking and disparate Asian American artists as Gregg Araki, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Arthur Dong, and Rea Tajiri, the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film and Video Festival dispels and destroys stereotypes annually. Last year's event screened 80 films, including features, shorts, docs, and classic films highlighting Asian concerns. The festival, now entering its 19th year, strives to promote works with honest and complex voices, drawing from inner strengths of Asian people rather than as direct contradictions to stereotypes in mainstream media. Presented by Visual Communications, the festival not only encourages Asian Americans to create their own works, but also not to rely on established outlets and venues for their works to screen. "Let's instead create new places for our works to be shown," suggests festival co-director Abe Ferrer. See Listing.

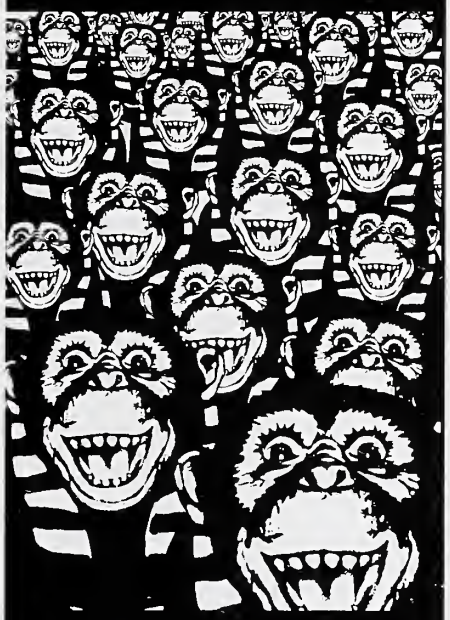
a competitive, casual atmosphere. Cats: feature (over 60 min.), narrative (under 60 min.), doc (under 60 min.), experimental, animation, student. Awards: travel, tickets, t-shirts & cash. Formats: 16mm, Beta, DV. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $30; $20 (students). Contact: PIFVF, Firstglance Films, Box 571105, Tarzana, CA 91356; (818) 464-3544; www.newimaging.com/festival/index.html

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June 15-28, NY. Deadline: Jan. 20. Fest takes place at the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center & is co-presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. Fest was created to advance public education on human rights issues & concerns w/ highlights from the fest presented in a growing number of cities around the world. Cats: All genres are incl. Awards: Nestor Almendros Award for $5,000 given to one filmmaker in the festival for courage in filmmaking. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS (preview tapes are not returned, they are recycled). No entry fee. Contact: HRWIFF, John Anderson, 350 Fifth Ave., 34th fl., New York, NY 10118; (212) 216-1263; fax: 736-1300; andersj@hrw.org; www.hrw.org/iff

INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL, April 14-21, MT. Deadline: Dec. 15. Fest's mission is to promote knowledge & understanding about wildlife & habitat through excellent & honest wildlife films and other media. Cats & entry fees: Music Video ($75); Children ($100); TV ($150); News story ($50); Point of View ($75); Environmental ($150); Human Dimensions ($150); School Group ($25); Amateur ($50); Newcomer ($75); Non Broadcast ($100). Awards incl. Best of Fest, Best Photography, Best Soundmix, Editing, Script, Narration, Use of Music, Educational Value, Scientific Content. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, S-VHS. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM), U-Matic (NTSC). Entry fees: $25-$200 (depending on cat, see above). Contact: IWFF, Randy Ammon, 27 Fort Missoula Rd. Ste. 2, Missoula, MT 59804; (406) 728-9380; fax: 728-2881; iwff@wildlifefilms.org; www.wildlifefilms.org

LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL (VC FILMFEST), May 17-24, CA. Deadlines: Dec. 8 (early); Jan. 12 (final). Fest was est. in 1983 to promote & present the best in Asian Pacific cinema and has grown from a two-weekend event consisting of a dozen films to a major showcase presenting nearly 100 productions by Asian Pacific American & Asian Int'l media makers. World & local premieres of major new works, media panels, and a wide variety of special events have become important elements of this world-class event which attracts audiences from throughout S. Calif. & the world. Works in all genres by Asian & Pacific Americans with themes involving, but not limited to, Asian Pacific American culture, history, and experiences are welcome & encouraged. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental. Awards: Golden Reel Award for Best Short Film; New Visions Award for Innovation in Filmmaking; Audience Awards for Best Short & Feature-Length Film. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: U.S., $20 (early), $30 (final); Int'l, $30 (early); $40 (final). Contact: VC Filmfest, Fest Dir., c/o Visual Communications, 120 Judge John Aiso St., Basement Level, Los Angeles, CA 90012; (213) 680-4462 x. 68; fax: 687-4848; viscom@apanet.org; www.vconline.org/filmfest

NASHVILLE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, June 6-10, TN. Deadlines: Dec. 15 (early); Feb. 28 (final). Formerly the Sinking Creek Film & Video Festival, fest is the longest-running film event in the South w/ an int'l reputation for its support &

call for entries
the 8th new york underground film festival
march 7-13, 2001

deadline dec 1
late deadline jan 1
p 212.675.1137
f 212.675.1152
festival@nyuff.com
www.nyuff.com

the 4th annual
the Double Take documentary film festival
may 3-6, 2001
durham, north carolina
call for entries
deadline: december 28
late deadline: january 8
35mm, 16mm; betacam, digital video
for information and entry forms:
919.660.3699
ddff@duke.edu
www.ddff.org
in association with the center for documentary studies at duke university

CALL FOR ENTRIES
BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
APRIL 20th - 26th, 2001
A celebration of the art of cinema showcasing the best work of exceptional filmmakers from around the world. Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary, Best Short plus the Audience Choice Award. Deadline for entries is 1 December 2000. Works-in-progress welcome provided final print will be ready by 1 April 2001. See web site for entry form or contact us by phone or fax.
Web Site: bermudafilmfest.com
E-mail: bdafilm@ibl.bm
Tel: (441) 293-3456 • Fax: (441) 293-7769
Eager audiences, pink beaches and major parties – join us!

encouragement of independent media. Besides programming 185 films & providing high end industry level workshops, last year's fest broke records for attendance & number of films sold. Fest incl. workshops, panels, screenings, parties & closing awards ceremony. Cats incl. short narrative, animation, doc, feature, student, experimental, young filmmakers, family/children, TV (episodic & pilots only). Awards: cash prizes awarded for all cats plus a new special award, The Regal Cinema/ Nashville Independent Film Festival Dreammaker Award which grants the award-winning film a week's run in a Regal Cinema in Los Angeles County which then qualifies the award for Academy Award consideration. 1st prize in the short narrative & animation categories also qualifies winner for Academy Award consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, and Digi-Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10 (young filmmaker—high school age or younger); $30/$35 (under 60 min.); $40/$50 (over 60 min.); $40 (TV entries). Contact: NIFF, Michael Catalano, Exec. Dir., Box 24330 , Nashville, TN 37202; Fed Ex/UPS only send to: NIFF, c/o Filmhouse, 810 Dominican Dr., Nashville, TN 37228; (615) 742-2500; fax: 742-1004; niffilm@bellsouth.net; www.nashvillefilmfestival.org

NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS, March 26-April 11, NY. Deadline: Jan. 5. Highly regarded noncompetitive series presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center & Museum of Modern Art. Founded in '72, fest presents average of 23 features & 15 shorts each yr. at MoMA. About 900 entries submitted. No cats; all genres & lengths considered. Shorts presented w/ features. Films generally shown twice; however, docs may be shown only once. Films selected by 3 programmers at Film Society & 3 curators from museum. Fest is well publicized; all programs reviewed in *New York Times* & *Village Voice*. Generally sells out (attendance averages 93% & estimated at 25,000). Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & be NY premieres w/ no prior public exhibition. Send s.a.s.e. for entry form or download from web site. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: No entry fee. Contact: NDNF, Sara Bensman, Film Coordinator, FilmSociety of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023;(212) 875-5638; fax: 875-5636; sbensman@filmlinc.com; www.filmlinc.com

NEW ENGLAND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 26-31, MA. Deadline: Dec. 1.New England's 26th annual primary competitive regional fest devoted to new works by any independent video or filmmaker who is a resident or student in New England states: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, upstate NY, north of & incl. Westchester County. (residency req. for eligibility). Also open to any undergrad or graduate student who has completed his/her works while attending a New England college or university, or any undergrad or graduate who maintains New England residency while attending college elsewhere. Student entries must have been completed while a student. Cats: All lengths & genres. Awards: A total of $7,000 in cash & services is awarded. Awards in several independent & student categories w/ distinctions for film & video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (first entry); $25 (students, first entry); $10 (any additional entries). Contact: NEFVF, Boston Film/Video Foundation, 1126 Boylston St. #201, Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540 x. 18; fax: 536-3576; devon@bfvf.com; www.bfvf.org

NEW YORK LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL, May 31-June 10, NY. Deadline: Dec. 22 (early); Feb. 12 (final). Committed to presenting diverse & culturally inclusive programs, fest showcases all genres of film, video & new digital media (incl. dramatic features & shorts, docs & experimental works) by, for, or of interest to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, or transgendered persons. Jury awards incl. proposals for lecture & film-clip presentations, curated film/video programs & interactive media installations also accepted. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short. Awards: Jury awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Feature Doc & Best Short. Formats: Digital CD-ROM, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15 (early); $25 (final). Contact: The New Festival Inc., 47 Great Jones St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 254-7228; fax: 254-8655; newfest@idt.net;www.newfestival.org

SAN ANTONIO CINEFESTIVAL, Feb. 22-25, TX. Deadline: Nov. 29. Now in its 24th edition, the country's longest running int'l Chicano/Latino film & video fest will feature seven days of film screenings, workshops & panels at the historic Guadalupe Theater and in venues throughout San Antonio. Fest will incl. premieres, workshops, panels & special screenings of videos produced by young filmmakers. CineFestival's Premio Mesquite & honorable mention awards will be given in the following cats: narrative (feature & short), doc, experimental, First Work/Emerging Artist, and will incl. a special Jury Award to entry that best exhibits the spirit of CineFestival. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $20; $10 (students: high school, college & community youth video training programs. Contact: SACF, Ray Santisteban, Dir. of Media Arts, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., San Antonio, TX 78207; (210) 271-3151 x. 32; fax: 271-3480; rays@guadalupeculturalarts.org; www. guadalupeculturalarts.org/media.html

SAN DIEGO LATINO FILM FESTIVAL, March 6-11, CA. Deadline: Nov. 30. In the last 7 years, some 350 Latino films & videos have been screened at venues across San Diego & Baja Calif. to some 22,000 people. Longest-running annual Latino/Chicano film & video festival in S. CA. Award-winning films/videos from throughout the U.S., Mexico & Latin America have been screened. As in previous years, fest will incl. screenings throughout San Diego & Tijuana community, discussions w/ filmmakers & catalog of all work screened. Looking for works by Latinos &/or about Latino experience produced between 1998-2000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 (payable by check or money order to: Media Arts Center San Diego). Contact: SDLFF, Ethan van Thillo, c/o Media Arts Center San Diego, 2039 29th St., San Diego, CA 92104; (619) 230-1938; fax: 234-9722; sdlff@sdlatinofilm.com; www.sdlatinofilm.com

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 19-May 3, CA. Deadline: Dec. 1 (docs, shorts, animation, experimental & TV); Jan. 3 (narrative features). Founded in 1957 & the oldest film festival in America, SFIFF is presented each spring by the San Francisco Film Society, showcasing approx. 200 features, docs & shorts; fest is dedicated to highlighting current trends in int'l film & video, w/ an emphasis on work w/out U.S. distrib. Fest has two sections: the invitational, noncompetitive section for recent features, archival presentations, retrospectives and special awards and tributes recognizing individual achievement; and the competitive section for doc, shorts, animation, experimental and TV. Awards incl. Golden Gate Award with $500 cash & Certificates of Merit. All Golden Gate Award winners in the Film & Video, New Visions & Bay Area Divisions will compete during the fest for Grand Prize awards for Best Doc, Best Bay Area Doc, Best Short and Best Bay Area Short. Grand Prize awards incl. $1,000 in cash. Narrative features by emerging filmmakers that do not have a U.S. distributor at the time of the fest are eligible for the SKYY Prize, a juried cash award of $10,000 for outstanding filmmaking. During the fest, three audience awards are given: Best Narrative Feature, Best Doc Feature & Online Audience Award for Best Short. Noncompetitive awards incl. Akira Kurosawa Award for lifetime achievement in feature film directing; Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award for lifetime achievement directing docs, short films, animation or work for TV; Peter J. Owens Award honoring a film actor whose work exemplifies brilliance, independence & integrity; Mel Novikoff Award to individual or institution whose work has enhanced film-going public's knowledge & appreciation of world cinema. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", Beta, Beta SP, DigiBeta, VHS, DVD. Preview on VHS or DVD. Entry fees: $45-200 (depending on length of film or video). Contact: SFIFF, 39 Mesa St., Ste. 110, The Presidio, San Francisco, CA 94129; (415) 561-5000; fax: 561-5099; ggawards@sfiff.org; www.sfiff.org

SEDONA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 2-4, AZ. Deadline: Dec. 1 (early); Jan. 8 (final). 7th annual fest features the finest in current American & int'l independent cinema, tributes, panel discussions & an in-depth workshop entitled "Visual Effects: Image With Imagination." Cats: dramatic and doc (features and shorts) & animation. Awards: Audience choice—Best of Festival for feature-length & short films. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (shorts, 30 min. & under); $50 (features); $10 discount for entries postmarked before Dec. 1. Contact: (by mail) SIFF, Box 2515, Sedona, AZ 86339; (by delivery service) SIFF, 1725 W. Hwy 89A, Ste. #2, Sedona, AZ 86336; (800) 780-2787 or (520) 282-0747; fax: 282-5358; scp@sedona.net; www.sedonafilmfestival.com

SUPER 8 FILM FESTIVAL, touring festival Deadline: Jan. 1. Fest takes your film on a world tour, with live musical accompaniment. Cats: experimental, feature, doc, animation, travelogue, garage sale find. Awards: Honorarium & prizes awarded. Formats: 16mm, super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Contact: S8FF, Paolo Davanzo, Fest Dir., 15 Mann, Irvine CA 92612; (213) 413-8783; fax: (949) 551-9068; polyesterprince@hotmail.com; www.polyesterprince.com

TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL, April 5-8, NM. Deadline. Jan. 5. Estab. as artists' colony more than a century ago, Taos is known for eclectic mixture of cultures, traditions & philosophies. It is in this light that fest organizers program over 150 new indie films & videos, incl. features, docs, videos & shorts during four-day fest. Highlights incl. Tributes; Latino & Native American programs, as well as comprehensive Media Literacy Forum w/ panel discussions, workshops & demonstrations focusing on state of media. Entries should have been completed w/in 18 mos. of fest & should be NM premieres. 2001 fest features Teen Media Conference. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation, music video, Any style or genre. Awards: Innovation Award; Taos Land Grant Award: 5 acres to one film (over 70 min.) that applies a fresh approach to storytelling &/or the cinematic medium. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, S-VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15-$40 (no fee for int'l entries). Contact: TTPF, Kelly Clement, Dir. of Programming, 7217 NDCBU, 1337 Gusdorf Rd. Ste. B, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 751-0637; fax: 751-7385; ttpix@ttpix.org; www.ttpix.org

WORLDFEST HOUSTON, April 20-29, TX. Deadlines; Dec. 15 (early); Jan. 15 (final). 34th annual fest screens 45-50 feature film premieres w/ an emphais on U.S. & int'l feature film premieres and an ongoing annual spotlight on an individual country an its films. Cats: feature, doc, animation, experimental, new media, student, screenplay, music video; plus over 200 subcategories. Awards incl. cash, services, film

stock, equipment, and some winners will have their work submitted to agencies & producers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4" (PAL or NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $45-$90. Contact: WFH, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256; (713) 965-9955; fax: 965-9960; worldfest@ aol.com; www.worldfest.com

Foreign

BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 20-26, Bermuda. Deadline: Dec. 1. 4th annual event in relaxed, intimate & casual setting is open to all films. New & unknown filmmakers welcome. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: Jury Prize (Best Narrative Film), Jury Prize (Best Doc), Bermuda Shorts Award & Audience Choice Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BIFF, Aideen Ratteray Pryse, Box HM2963, Hamilton HMMX, Bermuda; (441) 293-FILM; fax: 293-7769; bdafilm@ibl.bm; www.bermudafilmfest.com

BRADFORD FILM FESTIVAL, March 2-17, England. Deadline: Nov. 17. Fest has established itself as "one of the most exciting of European film festivals." Looking for feature, doc, or experimental film submissions of any length completed in 2000. Awards incl. Best European Short Film & Best European Feature Film. Formats: 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BFF, Nat'l Museum of Film & TV, Lisa Kavanagh, Bradford BD1 1NQ, England; 001 44 1274 203308; fax: 44 1274 770217; l.kavanagh@nmsi.ac.uk; www.nmpft.ac.uk

HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, April 30-May 6, Canada. Deadline: Dec. 14. Competitive fest celebrating Canadian & int'l doc filmmaking, encourages an appreciation & awareness of doc genre. Over 80 docs are screened in four programs incl. Canadian Spectrum, Int'l Showcase, Lifetime Achievement Award Retrospective and, in 2001, Spotlight on the Nordic Countries. Entry & registration forms avail. on web site. Various awards given. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, Digital Beta. Preview on VHS. Int'l entry fee: U.S. $25. Contact: Hot Docs, 517 College St., Ste. 420, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6G 4A2; (416) 203-2155; fax: 203-0446; sabel@hotdocs.ca; www.hotdocs.ca

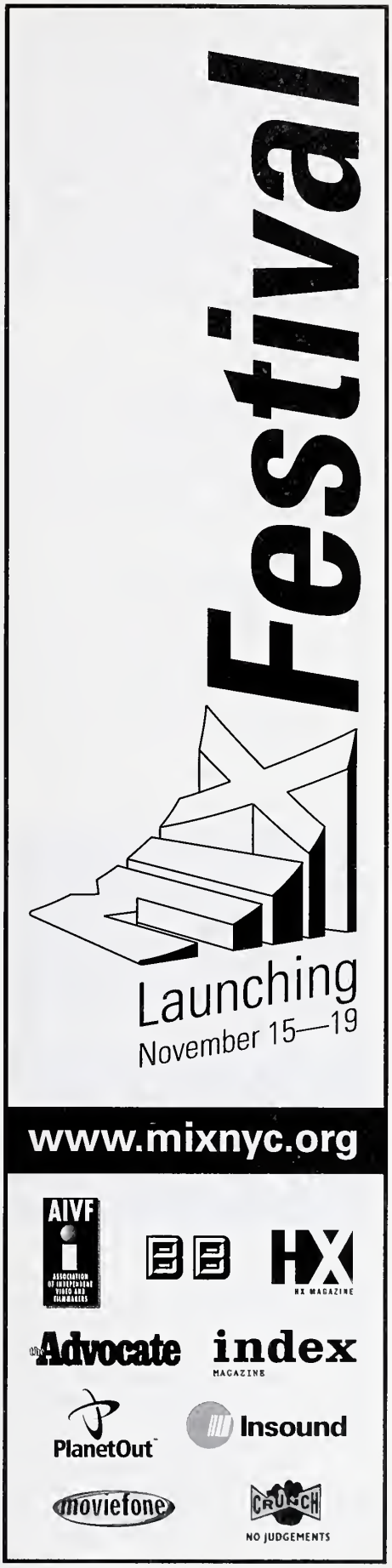
INSIDE OUT TORONTO LESBIAN AND GAY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 17-27, Canada. Deadline: Jan. 5. Fest, now in its 11th fabulous year, is an exciting & important venue for queer filmmakers from around the world. Fest hosts the largest lesbian & gay festival in Canada & one of the largest in the world. Last year's fest screened more than 300 films & videos in 84 programs w/ sold out screenings daily. In the past year fest has assisted in securing theatrical & broadcast distribution for several films & videos through our relationships w/ Canadian film & TV entities. Fest is not only a highly anticipated cultural event renowned for its hospitality & integrity in programming, but an excellent opportunity to network w/ other independent film- and video makers & interested industry representatives. Awards are given for both local & int'l work. Jury awards incl. The Bulloch Award for Best Canadian Work, the Akau Award for Best Lesbian Short, the Cruiseline Award for Best Gay Male Short, and the Charles St. Video Award for Best Emerging Toronto Artist. Audience Awards incl. the Showcase Award for Best Feature, the Ellen Flanders Award for Best Doc & the Mikey Award for Best Short. In all, more than $5,000 in cash and prizes is awarded annually. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Inside Out, 401 Richmond St. West, Ste. 219, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 3A8; (416) 977-6847; fax: 977-8025; inside@insideout.on.ca; www.insideout.on.ca

IT'S ALL TRUE INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, March 29-April 8, Brazil. Deadline: Jan. 15. Fest takes place simultaneously in Saõ Paulo & Rio de Janeiro and intends to exhibit fresh & original docs to promote meetings aiming to improve the int'l discussion about the genre. Fest incl. Brazilian & Int'l competitions & special retros. Cats: Brazilian & Int'l competition. Awards: Best Int'l Doc & Best Brazilian Doc Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: It's All True, Amir Labaki, Fest Dir., Associacao Cultural Kinoforum, RuaSimao Alvares, 784/2, 05417.020, Saõ Paolo-SP, Brazil; 011 55 11 8529601; fax: 55 11 852 9601; itstrue@ibm.net;www.kinoforum.org/itsalltrue/

MALMO CHILDREN AND YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL, March 13-18, Sweden. Deadline: Jan. 1. 18th annual competitive fest features about 100 titles shown to audiences estimated at 13,000 over 5 days. Main feature is latest films from Nordic countries plus Int'l Panorama. Program incl. seminar for teachers & others who use film; different theme each year. Co-produced w/ Swedish Film Inst & Film i Skåne. Fest also incl. debates & seminars for people working w/ film. Fest is also the meeting place for Children & Youth film in N. Europe Cats: feature, short, docs, animation. Awards: City of Malmö Award SEK50.000 ($5400) to best film; Shortfilm award; Best Nordic Short film. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BUFF, Lennart Ström, Box 179, SE-201 21 Malmö, Sweden; 001 46 40 30 91 64; fax: 46 40 30 53 22; info@buff.nu; www.buff.nu

OPORTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL-FANTASPORTO, Feb., Portugal. Deadline: Dec. 15. Now in 21st edition, non-competitive fest debuted in 1981, founded by editors of film magazine Cinema Novo & has evolved into competitive fest for features that focus on mystery, fantasy & sci-fi. Official Section, competition for fantasy films; Directors' Week, competition for 1st & 2nd films (no thematic strings); Out of Competition for Films of the World, information section & retro section. Fest runs in 12 theaters w/ 4,000 seats altogether & screens nearly 300 features. Press coverage extensive from major newspapers, radio stations & TV networks. Entries must have been completed in previous 2 years. Awards incl. Best Film, Best Direction, Best Actor/Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Special Effects, Best Short Film, Special Award of the Jury. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). No entry fee. Contact: Fantasporto, Rua Anîbal Cunha, 84 – sala 1.6, 4050-048 Porto, Portugal ; 011 351 222 076 050; fax: 351 222 076 059; fantas@caleida.pt; www.caleida.pt/fantasporto

REVELATION INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, March 5-11, Australia. Deadline: Jan. 1. Fest is a non-competative event & represents Austrailia's major alternative film festival. Fest seeks to bring to Oz the best in maverick spirit & individual filmic style. For 2001, RIFF hosts the festival component for the Australian International Documentary Conference, so it's docs only. Cats: Doc only for 2001. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Betacam SP, VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: RIFF, Richard Sowada, Fest Dir., PO Box 135, S. Fremantle, WA Australia 6162; 011 61 8 93362482; fax: 61 8 9336 2482; dakota@omen.net.au; www.omen.net.au/~dakota/riff.htm



NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. THE INDEPENDENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JAN. 1 FOR MAR. ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

COMPETITIONS

6TH ANNUAL SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION awards $300 & video copy of 16mm film. Any subject or genre, original or adaptation (if you have rights); up to 30 min. low-budget production. No entry fee or appl.; scripts not returned. Deadline: Dec. 1. Send screenplay synopsis to: Screenplay Competition, School of Comm, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; For more info call Prof. Philbin (616) 895-3668; philbinj@gvsu.edu

AMERICAN SCREENWRITERS ASSOCIATION is sponsoring a new contest, Screenwriting from the Soul, dedicated to finding, "the most heartwarming, soulful story of the year." Grand Prize: $500, script consultation & dinner w/ Richard Krevolin, USC Screenwriting Professor & author of "Screenwriting from the Soul." Entry fees: $25 (ASA members); $35 (non-members). Deadline: Feb. 29. Contact: ASA, Box 12860, Cincinnati, OH 45212; (513) 731-9212; johnj@asascreenwriters.com; www.asascreenwriters.com

BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION NATIONAL STUDENT SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION is designed to promote & recognize outstanding student scripts in categories of feature film, short film & TV series. All full & part-time students, undergrad or graduate, in U.S. institutions of higher education. Awards: $200 check, software from Screenplay Systems Inc., book of choice from Focal Press. Deadline: Jan. 2001. Contact: Broadcast Education Assoc.; Dept of Comm.; CA State Univ., Fullerton, CA 92834; (714) 278-5399; fax: 278-2209; efink@fullerton.edu; www.marquette.edu/bea/write/STU-00-COMP.htm

COLUMBUS SCREENPLAY DISCOVERY AWARDS: To bridge gap between writers & entertainment industry. One screenplay accepted monthly to receive rewrite notes from script consultant. Awards: Up to $10,000 option, script analysis, film courses, conferences, software. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $55. Contact: Columbus Screenplay Discovery Awards, 433 N. Camden Dr., Ste. 600, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (310) 288-1988; fax: 288-0257; awards@HollywoodNetwork.com; www.HollywoodNetwork.com

DRAMA GARAGE THURSDAY NIGHT SCRIPT READING SERIES: Drama Garage holds a once a month script reading at Occidental Studios in Los Angeles w/ a professional director & professional actors. Writer chosen receives copy of Final Draft software, professional reading & is interviewed by IntheBiz.net, a web site & private networking org for assistants in entertainment industry to agents & producers looking for new talent. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $25. For appl. see web site; for rules & submission info contact: Drama Garage Thursday Night Script Reading Series, 1861 N. Whitley, Ste. 205, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 993-5700; www.dramagarage.com

ERIK BARNOUW AWARD recognizes outstanding reporting or programming on network or cable TV, or in doc film concerned w/ American history, study of Amer. history, &/or the promotion of history. Only works released in 2000 eligible for award given in 2001. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Erik Barnouw Award, Org. of Amer. Historians, 112 N. Bryan Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408; (812) 855-9852; fax: 855-0696; kara@oah.org

FILM ESCAPADE: Juried competition seeks shorts & features. Cash prizes. Cats: narrative, doc, animation, exp., music video. Formats: VHS, 16mm. Entry fees: $15 (shorts); $20 (features). Deadline: Dec 10. To enter, send s.a.s.e. to Miller/McCann Film Escapade, Box 54320, Philadelphia, PA 19105; fax: (610) 992-9128; FilmMiller@aol.com; Dziga24@aol.com; www.filmescapade.freeservers.com

HOLLYWOOD SCREENPLAY CONSULTANTS SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: To find quality screenplays for Hagan Prods., Inc. to produce & Cine-Vision 2000 to distribute. Seeking low budget (less than $1.5 million), character or story driven, feature film screenplays. Should be live action, 1 or 2 locations ideal, 10 or less characters, 90-120 pgs. Any genre considered. Cats: feature, short, animation, TV movie, TV mini-series, TV series (currently in production or not). Each entry must not have been sold, optioned, in turnaround, in preproduction or have been produced at time of submitted deadline. Prizes: 1st. place, $2,000; 2nd, $1,000; 3rd, $500. A prominent agent, a WGA signatory agency, will consider winners for representation. Top 3 winners receive copy of *Screen & Stage Play Marketing Secrets* by James Russell. Each entry will receive 2 page critique & coverage of their screenplay from HSC. Entry fee: $75. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: 17216 Saticoy St., #303, Van Nuys, CA 91406; (818) 994-5977.

HOLLYWOOD SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST: To provide new valuable outlet for recognizing & promoting quality scripts of undiscovered writers worldwide. Registered feature films in English; motion picture standard master scene format required. Must be unoptioned, btwn 90 & 130 pgs. Awards: Winning script sent to agent who will forward it to appropriate producer. 1 year subscription to *Creative Screenwriting*. Entry fee: $50. Deadline: monthly, postmarked by 15th. Contact: 1605 Cahuenga Blvd., Ste. 213, Hollywood, CA 90028; (800) SCRIPTS; hwdscreen@aol.com; www.moviewriting.com

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted, contest limited to first 500 entries. First prize: $1,500. Deadlines: Dec. 29 (early); Jan. 31 (final). Entry fees: $40 (early); $50 (final). Rules & entry forms avail. on website or send s.a.s.e. to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (831) 646-0910; mryfilm@aol.com; www.filmmonterey.com

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature-length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ $40 entry fee payable to: NTV, 21 Central Park West, Ste. 1T, NY, NY 10023.

ORIGINAL MOVIE SCENE CONTEST: You're invited to craft a sensational movie scene (1,500-2,000 words) in which La Grande Dame Champagne is the star. The winning scene posted on website & the grand prize "An Academy Award Weekend for Two." Deadline: Dec. 31. Send double-spaced, typed, original scene to Vanity Fair Promotion Dept., 350 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017, Attn: La Grande Dame Contest; (212) 888-7575; www.clicquot.com

PLASTIC ENTERTAINMENT $10,000 SCREENPLAY CONTEST for unproduced feature length scripts. Deadline: Dec. 31. $10,000 grand prize. All genres. Winning script (& others) may be further optioned or purchased by Plastic Ent., Inc. (you retain all rights until sale is negotiated). Send script with $40 entry fee (check or M.O.), payable to: Plastic Ent., Inc., 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hollywood, CA 90069.

SCRIPTAPALOOZA 3RD ANNUAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION. Grand prize $25,000. Deadlines: postmarked Jan 5, (early, $40), Mar 5, (first deadline, $45), April 16, (late entry, $50). Also ScriptapaloozaTV seeks entries for its second annual TV writing competition. You can submit a spec script of an existing TV series or a pilot. Deadline: Nov. 15. Contact: 7775 Sunset Blvd. PMB #200, Hollywood, CA 90046; (323) 654-5809; info@scriptapalooza.com

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. 10 entries chosen as winners; top 2 receive $100, other 8 receive $50, plus any revenue received from rental or sales. Max. length: 6 min. Entry fee: $20, add $10 for each additional entry on same cassette; max. 3 entries per entrant. All entries must include entry form. Tapes & boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS or DV. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Include s.a.s.e. if want tapes returned. Deadline: postmarked 1st Sat. in Feb. (annually). Contact: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010. www.videoshorts.com

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

DIRECTING SEMINAR DEBUTS IN TEXAS. Guy Magar, director of over 40 DGA productions. brings his intensive weekend seminar to Houston Nov. 11-12. Workshop incl. 14 film studies illustrating the director's involvement from casting/location, to shot lists (every scene on paper is shown on video), to dailies, to the finished film edited w/ effects/sound/music. Course also benefits writers, producers, actors, DPs, editors, etc. Substantial discount to early birds, students, WIFT members. Contact: (800) 815-5545; www.actioncut.com

INTERNATIONAL FILM SEMINARS INC. is a NY-based nonprofit organization est. in 1960 & has evolved from an informal gathering of filmmakers & students to a respected, est. media arts institution recognized as a leader in continuing the tradition of doc & other independent film & video in their production, exhibition, scholarship & study. Contact: Int'l Film Seminar, 462 Broadway, Ste. 510, New York, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax 925-3482; ifsnyc@aol.com

SCRIPTS WANTED FOR INDEPENDENT FILM ACTING CLASSES. See your scenes shot on real locations with our actors trained specifically for Independent films. Use this as a way to rewrite your scripts & scenes. Send to: The Acting Factory, 38 S. Federal Hwy, Dania, FL 33004.

SOUTHERN STORIES FOUNDATION announces 3rd Annual Evening of Short Films, Dec. 7 at Birmingham Museum Of Art's Steiner Auditorium. Call for entries for all video & filmmakers to submit their short film for screening during this event. Work must be submitted on VHS & be under 30 min. Deadline: Nov. 24. Filmmakers are encouraged to be present Dec. 7 to participate in the evening's events, meet the audience, answer questions about their work & meet others interested in filmmaking. Send tape to: Pat Gallagher, Southern Stories Foundation, Box 6409, Montgomery, AL 36106; (334) 221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Films • Tapes Wanted

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for independent shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to *Bijou Matinee*, Box 649, New York, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

CURATOR SEEKS SHORT VIDEO/FILM WORKS (under 15 min.) for ongoing video/film showcases at Washington DC area art galleries. All genres considered. Send VHS preview tapes (incl. s.a.s.e. for return) to: Robert Parrish, 1215 N. Vermont St., Arlington, VA 22201; hoppervideo@erols.com

CYSTATION seeking short films/videos & Flash animations for 24 hour internet distrib. We actively promote filmmakers on our site & are devoted to the independent artist! Check out website for info or send films to: CyStation Submissions, Box 68, Carlsbad, CA 92018; www.CyStation.com

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by independent producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS preview, Beta , VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org

FILM FLEADH TOUR 2001 & SCREENPLAY COMPETITION accepting submissions. All genres accepted. Features & shorts. East Coast Post Audience Award to best feature. Accept films on DV also. Preview on VHS (NTSC) . . . no PAL. Script criteria: Must be over 80 pages. All genres accepted. Need not be an Irish theme to be submitted. Must be written by an Irish or Irish-American writer or writer(s) of Irish descent living outside Ireland. Deadline: Dec. 1. Entry fees: $25 (per film entry). $30 (per script entry). Contact: Film Fleadh Foundation, 29 Greene St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 966-3030 (x. 247); Filmfleadh@aol.com; www.FilmFleadh.com

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts, feature works-in-progress & web films seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FIREWATER FILMS, only year-round short film series in NYC, seeks short film submissions (cats: narrative, doc, animation & experimental). Films shown on both VHS & 16mm formats at Big Top Theater. Contact: Firewater Films, Box 20039, NY, NY 10025; (212) 414-5419; fax: 724-8190; www.firewater-films.com

INDUSTRIAL TV: cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, subversive, animation & underground works for incl. in fall season. Controversial & subversive material encouraged. Exposure in NYC area. Contact: Edmund Varuolo c/o 2droogies prods., Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, (415) 553-2218; sdwyer@kqed.org

MUSIC VIDEOS WANTED. Submit original music videos for a super series for the electromagnetic spectrum. Any genre or subject. Amateurs, students, & pros welcome. No quality too bad or too good. Submit VHS cassette, email address &



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www.wexarts.org

s.a.s.e. (for return) to: Grrrowl Productions, 24 Walker Dr., Belle Mead, NJ 08502; grrrowlproductions@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/grrrowlproductions/

MY NAME IS CONSTANT: I am a video artist, musician & poet. Since 1997 I've been producing a weekly conceptual video art program on Time Warner (public access TV) in Manhattan & Brooklyn. Titled Snacontt Arts. I am looking for work from different artists to show on the program. Contact: Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; snacontt@aol.com

NEW WEBSITE ALT.SHO.COM, backed by Showtime Networks Inc., needs electronic entertainment for inaugural Alternative Media Festival. Submissions must be original electronic entertainment presentations. Cats: comedy, drama, action, doc, sci-fi, horror, family, experimental, or toys/games. Formats accepted: Quicktime, Flash (source only), Director Shockwave, Windows Media (AVI), MPG, Java Applet, HTML (Java Script, VB Script, Animated GIF) or RealMedia. Deadline: Nov. 15; www.alt.sho.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from independent filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede evening's feature, plus brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. considered for regular group shows of independent filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; ph./fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

REEL ALTERNATIVE FILM SALON; Brooklyn's original microcinema featuring indie filmmakers of color, seeks film & script submissions for 2nd season. All genres & formats welcome. Special interest in female action flicks March 2001 & animation April 2001. Film (submitted on VHS) & script submissions must incl. synopsis, bio & $10 (check/m.o.). Films screened monthly & scripts staged quarterly. Contact: (718) 670-3616; www.ighmultimedia.com

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of 6 artists who travel on 11-day, 9-city route, now accepting appl. from film/video artists. Artists asked to submit appl. form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & $20 entry fee. Performance, installation art, works-in-progress not accepted. Note: Some Circuit sites do not have film projection capabilities. After pre-screening process, 40 finalists judged by panel in April 2001. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: S. Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526.

SUBMIT WORK FOR POSSIBLE EXHIBITION in late 2000 or early 2001 concerning personal experiences of adopting children or being adopted. Interested in all visual media. Send cover letter stating interest in & artistic history with subject, slides, videotapes, etc. to Karen van Meenen, c/o Afterimage, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; Re: adoption exhibit.

THE SHORT LIST, the showcase for American & int'l short films, airs nat'ly on PBS. Pays $100/min. All genres 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced in assoc. w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards five Kodak product grants annually to selected filmmakers on series. Submit on VHS. For appl., send s.a.s.e. to: Jack Ofield, Director, The Production Center, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; ShortList@mail.sdsu.edu; www.theshortlist.cc

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL, one of the oldest alternative media orgs in U.S., seeks film & video submissions of short & feature length docs, narratives, experimental & other works attentive to intersections of race, class & gender. Projects that address other issues of political & social interest also welcome. Formats: 1/2" VHS. Send submissions, synopsis of the film & director's bio to: Third World Newsreel, Attn: Noel Shaw, 545 8th Ave., New York, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277; fax: 594-6417; twn@twn.org; www.twn.org

TV/HOME VIDEO production company seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films in VHS or S-VHS to Salt City Productions/ Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13220

WGBH-TV, BOSTON is committed to supporting filmmakers, incl. those who may never have considered local TV broadcast. Looking for independent films & videos to be part of ongoing local film series "Viewpoint", showcasing works from New England & around the world. Films selected for broadcast will receive honorarium from WGBH. Tapes accompanied by s.a.s.e. will be returned. Broadcast masters formats: DigiBeta, Beta SP, D5 or D3. Can't accept programming produced for public access cable. Send VHS screening copies of your doc, narrative film, or animation (no length requirements) to: Chad Davis, Viewpoint, WGBH-TV, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-2647; chad_davis@wgbh.org

ZOIE FILMS INTERNET FESTIVAL, March. Deadline: Feb. 2nd. Annual festival will present approx. 30-50 films during year & showcases more than 60 filmmakers. New domestic & foreign films, fiction films & docs, animation, experimental, children's programs & film shorts will be incl. in festival. Awards incl. Zoie Star Award for Best Picture (domestic & foreign) People's Choice Awards & Certificates for various placements. Contact: Zoie Films, 539 Salem Woods Dr., Marietta, GA 30067; (404) 816-0602; fax: 560-6777; www.zoiefilms.com/filmfestxprt.htm

Publications

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE OF AFTERIMAGE, The Journal of Media Arts & Cultural Criticism. Seeking articles on subject of "Using Media Arts as a Therapeutic Tool". Articles to be published include exhibition & book reviews, event reports, profiles of individuals & organizations, personal essays & scholarly, research-based feature articles. Afterimage Writer's Guidelines avail. upon request. Send completed (unpublished) articles, abstracts, outlines or proposals with cover letter & clips to Karen van Meenen, Editor, Afterimage, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607.

CANYON CINEMA announces publication of a major new catalog of avant-garde/exp. films & video tapes for rent & sale. This 500 page volume, the Canyon Cinema Catalog 2000 (#8), contains 285 illustrations & describes more than 3,500 works of cinematic art by 370 filmmakers. Also 25th Anniversary Catalog (incl. 1993-5 supplements) w/ over 3,500 film & video titles is avail. for $20. Ph./fax: (415) 626-2255; canyoncinema@usa.net; www.canyoncinema.com

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim numerous tax exemptions avail. in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp. & NY State Dept. of Taxation & Finance, 51-pg reference guide can be obtained from NY State Governor's Office or Tax Office. Contact: NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & TV Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369.

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Find an independent audience! The IPA's new directory to ind. magazine world can give you the name & number of the editor you need. For just $24.95 (plus $3.05 S&H) *Annotations: A Guide To The Independent Press* opens up a world of diverse & exciting contacts. Send check to: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 634-4401; www.indypress.org

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE (IFFCON 2000) transcripts of 7th conf. avail. IFFCON is North America's premier financing event for independent film. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers incl. "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Financing w/ Int'l TV." Send $46 to: IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: Essential Resource for Making Ind. Film, Video, & New Media. 2000 Edition. Incl. nat'l & int'l festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, & schools. Contact: 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org

THE JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeks written reviews of Univ. Film & Video Assoc. member films for possible incl. in journal. Send approx. 5 double-spaced pages to: Temple Univ., Dept. of Film & Media Arts, 14E Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8472; lerickson3@aol.com

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Nonprofit Inc. & Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made. Contact: (212) 319-2910

Resources • Funds

8x10GLOSSY.COM: Online artists' co-op offers free listing for all actors, technicians & orgs in directory & searchable database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of bulletin board. s.a.s.e. to: Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

ARTS LINK COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS allow U.S. artists & arts orgs to undertake projects overseas w/ colleagues in Central & Eastern Europe w/ grants up to $10,000. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of U.S. Deadline: Jan. 18. (postmark). Contact: Arts Link, CEC Int'l Partners, 12 W. 31st St., New York, NY 10001; artslink@cecip.org

BAVC JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Bay Area Video Coalition Job Resource Center provides S.F. residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books & job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-5 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org; www.bavc.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education org. dedicated to promoting art of filmmaking, is planning to est. filmmaking workshops in high schools & looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwriting software in

good working order. Donations of equip. are accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield (201) 444-9875.

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & orgs. Program provides partial assistance; max. amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FREE SOUNDTRACK SONGS if you credit song in your film credits. Professionally produced & mastered CD with 22 punk, rock, alternative, dance, love songs. Call John at Road Rash Music (ASCAP publisher) (703) 481-9113.

FREE VIDEO RECORDING: Open call to independent artists for Promote Art Works Inc.'s "Spontaneous Combustion" series, which airs monthly on Brooklyn Community Access TV. All fields; dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater considered. No works in progress accepted. Quality videotapes accepted for editing. Call Kathleen (718) 797-3116.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants up to $50,000 for production/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, can be completed within 1 year of award & have broadcast potential. Deadline: April 4. Contact: Nat'l Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500 x. 205.

FUNDS FROM THE FEDS! New booklet available to help individuals obtain money from the government. 48 page booklet gives info on how & where to get free money, free advice & free services from the government. Send $5 to cover the cost of printing, postage & handling to: Free Enterprise Inst., Government Giveaway Booklet Offer, Dept. GGB-407-1, Box 96071, Washington, DC 20090; www.FreeEnterprise Institute.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on issue in one of Foundation's 2 major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: Summer seminars & institutes for college & university teachers. Seminars incl. 15 participants working in collaboration w/ 1 or 2 leading scholars. Institutes provide intensive collaborative study of texts, historical periods & ideas to undergrad teaching in the humanities. Detailed info & appl. materials are avail. from project directors. Contact: (202) 606-8463; sem-inst@neh.gov; www.neh.gov

NATIONAL LATINO COMMUNICATIONS CENTER is a media arts production resource center that supports, produces & syndicates Latino programming for public TV. Purpose is to empower Latinos in U.S. throughout the broadcast communications media, provide quality programming illuminating the diversity of nat'l Latino ethos & support media talent whose creative visions will transform the Latino experience into compelling images. Write: NLCC, 3171 Los Feliz Blvd., Ste 200, LA, CA 90039; (213) 663-5606; www.nlcc.com/

NEW DAY FILMS: premier distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting appl. for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM AND TELEVISION is the preeminent entertainment industry assoc. for women in NYC dedicated to helping women reach highest levels of achievement in film, TV & new media. NYWIFT produces over 50 innovative educational programs & special events each year, & org's membership more than 1,100 women & men working in all areas of film, TV & new media industries. NYWIFT is part of a network of 40 women in film orgs worldwide, representing more than 1,000 members. For membership & Intern/Mentor program info, contact: NYWIFT, 6 East 39th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10016; staff@nywift.org; www.nywift.org

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is a unique online resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming prods, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 visitors each month. All articles & listings are free at: www.nefilm.com

NEWPROJECT.NET provides a new vehicle for producers in search of partnerships, financing & distribution for projects. An online database of presentations of projects in development, in production, or recently completed, NewProject.net is a place where professionals can "publish" & announce their copyrighted new projects & present them to programming execs, distrib. companies, potential underwriters, investors & other partners.

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by the Ind. Film Channel, was est. to provide finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers w/ low-budget English-lang features from U.S. & abroad. Selected films receive assistance w/ postproduction, implementing a festival strategy & securing distrib. Through Agenda 2000, exceptionally talented filmmakers w/ an est. body of work can receive production financing & assistance for features shot on digital video & intended for theatrical release. Fiction & non-fiction films considered for finishing funds & Agenda 2000. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405. (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com.

NYS COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Individual Artists Program announces availability of production funds for video, radio, audio, installation work & computer-based art. Maximum award $25,000. Artist must also be sponsored by nonprofit organization. Deadline: March 1. Contact: Don Palmer: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7063; dpalmer@nysca.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to pro 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, experimental, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for

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FEB. 8,9, & 10, 2001 • STARKVILLE, MS

Our 4th annual "Mag" welcomes all lengths, all genres. Cash awards, "Mags" given. Entries screened in 35mm, 16mm, Beta, VHS. No entry fee. Filmmakers who attend stay free. Congrats to last "Mag" winners: Mike Goscia's "Captive Audience", Marlene Rhein's "Let Me Tell You A Story", Bill Brown's "Confederation Park", Katherine Griffin's "The Innocents", and Dennis J. Courtney's "Araby".

For entry form write to:
Ron Tibbett, Festival Director
Magnolia Independent Film Festival
2269 Waverly Dr.
West Point, MS 39773
Phone (601) 494-5836
Fax (601) 494-9900
www.magfilmfest.com
Entry deadline Jan. 19, 2001

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For rules, send SASE to
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NOTICES

processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send s.a.s.e. w/ 55¢ stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND for writers & editors w/ AIDS. Emergency funds; small grants given each year to over 200 pro literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's funds not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 334-1660.

PORTLAND, OREGON FILMMAKING GRANTS: Digital Media Education Center of Portland, OR announcing open call for submissions for their prestigious Avid Film Camp 2000 program. 5-year-old program affords a boost to ind. feature directors looking for means to complete films & offers Avid authorized training to career editors. Film Camp films have gone on to Sundance, SXSW & NY Film Market. Submissions must be feature-length projects w/ shooting completed. Projects accepted on rolling basis. Contact: Kate Wolf, Digital Media Edu. Center, 5201 SW Westgate Dr., Ste. 114, Portland, OR 97221; (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

PR FOR YOUR INDIE FILM: Open City Communications provides high-impact, cost-effective public relations support for film & video releases, web casts, festivals, online sites, books & other entities in need of top-quality media attention. Contact: Opencity@aol.com; www.open-city.com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, free expression, social justice & civil liberties. 2 project cats: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000; max. $50,000). Highly competitive. Contact: Soros Doc. Fund, Open Society Inst., 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postproduction services at disc. rates. For rate card & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMISSION invites applicants for its 2000-2001 Scholars in Residence Program, providing support for full-time research & study in manuscript & artifact collections at any Commission facility. Program funds research that relates to the interpretive mission & advances goals of any PHMC program or facility. Proposals for a Collaborative residency are to be filed jointly by the interested scholar & host program/facility. Both programs open to all who are conducting research on PA history, incl. independent scholars, graduate students, educators, writers, filmmakers & others. Residencies avail. for 4 to 12 weeks (between 5/01/01 & 4/30/02) at rate of $1,500 per month. Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Division of History, PA Historical & Museum Commission, Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108; (717) 787-3034; lshopes@phme.state.pa.us

THIRD ANNUAL CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FUND: $500-$2000 postproduction completion grant for any length & genre on super 8, 16mm or 35mm. Emphasis placed on works that fit CUFF's mission to promote films & videos that innovate in form or content. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: CUFF, 3109 N. Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 327-FILM; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

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CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. JAN. 1 FOR MARCH ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $65/NONMEMBERS; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR MEMBERS, $90/NONMEMBERS. INCL. VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED & ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCL. CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD #; NAME ON CARD; EXP. DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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BROADCAST YOUR FILM on the Internet! WhoneedsTV.com is currently accepting submissions for independent films. Unlike other sites, you keep all the rights and control over your film. Details at: info@WhoneedsTV.com or (917) 282-2857.

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ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: *Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light*. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com

ATTORNEY: Former in-house business affairs counsel, providing legal & consulting services to the film, television and video community. Free initial consultation. Reasonable/flexible rates. Contact Ivan A. Saperstein, Esq. (914) 391-3452.

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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development thru distribution. Contact Robert L. Seigel, Esq., (212) 333-7000.

EXPERIENCED CAMERAMAN w/ Arri SR II 16mm and Betacam SP packages. Extensive experience in features and documentaries. Edgar Gil (718) 832-1846; maesegil@earthlink.net

EXPERIENCED CINEMATOGRAPHER with crew & equipment; 16mm & 35mm. Short films & features. Vincent (212) 779-1441.

GRANTWRITING/FUNDRAISING: Research, writing & strategy (for production, distribution, exhibition & educational projects of media). Successful proposals to NYSCA, NEA, NEH, ITVS, Soros Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Lila Acheson Wallace Foundation. Fast writers, reasonable rates. Wanda Bershen, (212) 598-0224; www.reddiaper.com; or Geri Thomas (212) 625-2011; www.artstaffing.com

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WELL-ESTABLISHED freelance camera group in NYC seeking professional cameramen and soundmen w/ solid Betacam video experience to work w/ our wide array of clients. If qualified contact COA at (212) 505-1911. Must have video samples/reel.

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SCREENPLAYS: LKM Productions is seeking polished screenplay submissions for no/low budget feature. Send to: P.O. Box 1620, Murray Hill Station, NY, NY 10156; questions, email: lkmproductions@yahoo.com; incl. s.a.s.e. if you want script returned.

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EVENTS

For New York Events: Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.). For Further information or to RSVP: www.aivf.org; Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 .

AIVF BOARD ELECTIONS

VOTE FOR THE AIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS POSTMARK DEADLINE DEC. 1!



November isn't just presidential election month, it's also time to vote for the AIVF Board of Directors, who provide support and vision to the organization. Play an active role in the formation of AIVF by voting! For more information, visit www.aivf.org

Only paid AIVF members are eligible to vote in the AIVF board elections. If your membership expired on or before October 15, 2000 and you did not renew, you are not eligible to vote. To verify your membership status or to renew, contact members@aivf.org or call (212) 807-1400 x. 236. Nominee statements and ballots have been mailed in late October and responses are due postmarked December 1, 2000.

AFTER HOURS

MEMBER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE

When: **First Wednesday** of every month (Oct. 4), from 6-9 p.m.; Library is open to all, weekdays 11-6 and is free to all; no RSVP necessary.

Our Filmmaker Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories and trade magazines to sample grant proposals and budgets. After Hours is the opportune time to utilitize the library, renew your membership, or buy FIVF-published books.

DON'T MISS! MEDIA ACTIVISM PANEL

Presented by New York Women In Film and Television, co-sponsored by AIVF & MediaRights.org. Nov. 8 at the Newseum/New York. See www.aivf.org for full details.

MEET & GREET:

MONARCH FILMS

When: Thurs., Nov. 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cost: Free/AIVF members; $10 general public



Monarch Films, Inc. is a domestic and international sales agency in the marketing of documentary films and reality programming around the world.

In business for ten years with over 140 hours of non-fiction television programing, Monarch's client base includes The Learning Channel, Discovery Channel, National Geographic Television, IFC/Bravo, the History Channel, the Travel Channel, the Sundance Channel, HBO, and many international video distributors and television broadcasters in more than 75 countries worldwide.

Represented projects include: Oscar-nominated film *Agee* (Ross Spears); Roger Nygard's *Six Days in Roswell*; Oscar winner Richard Kaplan's *Eleanor Roosevelt Story*, and Liz Garbus' *Juwies*.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

AIVF'S DIGITAL SHOOTOUT:

A COMPARISON OF DV TO 35MM TRANSFERS

When: Tuesday, Nov. 14 8-10 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives
(32 Second Ave. at Second St., NYC)
Cost: free AIVF members; $20 general public.

In Summer 2000, AIVF commissioned ten transfer facilities from around the world to transfer test footage shot on a Canon XL1 in both PAL and NTSC. The same footage was also shot on Super 16mm and transferred to 35mm. Accompanying an article by Robert Goodman on DV-to-35mm film transfer comparisons in the August/September issue of *The Independent*, this event is a public presentation of the results. The test footage will be shown to showcase the benefits and problems of the varying techniques.

Participating labs included: Cinesite, Cinesite Europe, Digital Image, Digital Film Group, DV Film Digital Transfers, Film Craft, Hokus Bogus, Swiss Effects, and Tape House Digital Film.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS

THE NATIVE AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL (NOV. 13-19)

Where: Smithsonian's George Gustav Heye Center, (1 Bowling Green, NYC).
Tickets: All screenings and events are free.
For further info: www.si.edu/nmai/fv

100 works from Native communities in Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Dominica, Mexico, and the United States will be featured. The festival focuses on the strong tribal or regional viewpoints among indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, and is the only Native American event of its kind that is international in scope.

AIVF (with Film/Video Arts and NYU Center for Media, Culture and History) co-presents an informal reception following a night of screenings on Thurs., Nov. 16 at 5:30 p.m. Come mix and mingle with festival filmmakers. Details posted at www.aivf.org

SELECT SCREENINGS AT THE WALTER READE THEATRE, NYC,

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Nov 1-9: *Jean Eustache Retrospective*
Nov 10-30: *Russian Films of the 1960s*

OUTSIDE NEW YORK: AIVF CO-PRESENTS

THE OHIO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL (NOV. 7-12)

Where: Cleveland, Ohio
For further info: (216) 781-1755; www.ohiofilms.com

AIVF proudly supports The Ohio Independent Film Festival & Market, the premiere independent film event in the Midwest! This year's fest boasts a strong line-up of independent films and the accompanying and acclaimed Independent Film School. Fest is founded, organized, and led by AIVF's Cleveland Salon.

THE ST. LOUIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (NOV. 10-12)
PANEL DISCUSSION: DOCS ARE INDIE FILMS, TOO! WHAT IT TAKES TO GET DOCUMENTARY FILMS ON THEATRICAL SCREENS

Where: St Louis, Missouri
for further info: (314) 454-0042; www.sliff.org

Seventh Art Releasing's Udy Epstein moderates a panel on nonfiction films in the theatrical marketplace. Don't miss other panels at this year's SLIFF, topics which include dealmaking with dot.coms, and the distribution marketplace for regional films.

ST. LOUIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

THE MIX GAY AND LESBIAN EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL (NOV. 15-19)

Where: Anthology Film Archives & the Pioneer Theatre, New York, NY
for further info: www.mixnyc.org.



MIX kicks off its 14th year as the longest running lesbian and gay film festival in New York and a premiere international venue for experimental media that has launched the careers of contemporary cinema greats such as Todd Haynes, Bruce LaBruce, Cheryl Dunye, Maria Maggenti, and Gus Van Sant.

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Visit the salons section at www.aivf.org for more info. *Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!*

Albany, NY:
When: First Wed. of each month, 6:30 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Anne del Castillo, (512) 322-0145; anne@austinfilm.org

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE, (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45 pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422; dot@inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, aivf_la@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, (414) 276-8563; www.mifs.org/salon

New Brunswick, NJ:
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668; dgproductions@hotmail.com

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Rochester, NY:
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San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.



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This column commemorates the 25th anniversity of AIVF. Every month, we revisit the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watch the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the November issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.

"It is hard to make independent films in any case, but regional filmmakers who develop features outside the major independent film production centers face extra challenges—and possibilities—in America's hinterlands."

Bernard Timberg & Thomas Arnold, 1981

"Despite the ease of super 8 transfers to video and the occasional super 8 coup, such as inclusion of a traveler's footage of Russian prisoners in the Afghan conflict in major news broadcasts . . . super 8, as such, is rarely seen. Vaulting the gates of major media and cultural institutions remains a project for the future."

Tony Napoli, 1982

"Viewer-be-damned 'home movies' is a clear possibility with 8mm video. Initially the tapes will provide an unprecedented view of family events. Then the tapes will be available for those who can face their terrible durations. Finally, the real test of home movies will fall upon them: their archival potential."

Bob Brodsky & Toni Treadway, 1984

"[Video distribution] is like the dark ages in Europe with big monasteries that keep arcane knowledge. When you make the pilgrimage to those monasteries, they pass on what they know and try to keep the light flickering. But outside of their confines, the light disappears. There's not a whole lot of traffic in video."

Neil Seiling, 1987

"The cliché . . . has it that the movies are the universal language. Where do such clichés come from? Most likely, and most forcefully, from the pens of those responsible for safe-guarding, elaborating, and otherwise propagandizing for the ever-flowing discourse on movies: the critics and journalists."

Ernest Larson, 1988

"Films are produced and negotiated to fit the [MPAA] ratings . . . Contrary to our jurisprudence, which protects all forms of



expression, the rating system censors serious films by the force of economic pressure."

Tessa Horan, 1990

"Many independent filmmakers start projects with such limited capital that by the time they've scraped enough money together for the principal photography and other production costs, they find themselves tapped out just as the film is about to be completed."

Patricia Spears Jones, 1991

"In anticipation of the [state arts council] budget cuts, many organizations have already scaled back or eliminated programs, screenings, and public events, cut back publicity, laid off staff, and raised prices."

Jon Burris, 1991

"Digital technology has had a wrenching effect on every industry that has adopted it."

Sanford Bingham, 1992

"In a country [like Japan] where appearances, consensus, and loyalty to the group are paramount, wanting to set your own agenda can be asking far too much. So it's not surprising that independent media in Japan exists on the fringe of the fringe, pursued by people who've abandoned any hope of participating in the mainstream."

Scott Sinkler, 1993

"Ultimately a filmmaker needs to use common sense and good judgment. Certainly in the early stages of production there may be no choice but to trust that the person across the table is not fishing for ideas for his or her film."

Stephen M. Goldstein, 1994

"Almighty God, Lord of life, we praise you for the advancements in computerized communications that we enjoy in our time. Sadly, however, there are those who are littering this information superhighway with obscene, indecent, and destructive pornography . . . guide the senators when they consider ways to . . . to preserve one of our greatest natural resources: the minds of our children and the future and moral strength of our nation."

U.S. Senator James Exon reads from a prayer to open the debate on his Communications Decency Act, 1995

"The bottom line is that independent producers are more likely than any other market to push the technology to the limits, because they have more time than money. Our challenge is to get new technology into the hands of as many independents as possible. If the independent community is interested in more than bleacher seats in the coming years of technology changeover, the strong hand is to support local media arts centers."

Luke Hones, 1995

"It's complicated. It's thematically dense and I don't think studio movies are that anymore. Eighty percent of [*Gods and Monsters*] was three people sitting in a room talking. It's about a man who's losing his powers, not gaining powers. It's about loss; it's about regret and melancholy. It has a gay man in the lead and it's not a perky gay lifestyle movie. It's about the darker, more complicated sides of being gay. I would never even for a second have pitched it to any studio."

Bill Condon, 1998

"While it's hard to criticize [DV], an inexpensive format that offers all the benefits of digital technology, the exact results of this revolution may be as disappointing as they are surprising. One unintended byproduct is the lowering of the value of production work."

S.D. Katz, 1999

COMPILED BY JIM COLVILL

FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and a series of resource publications, seminars and workshops, and information services. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:



The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation
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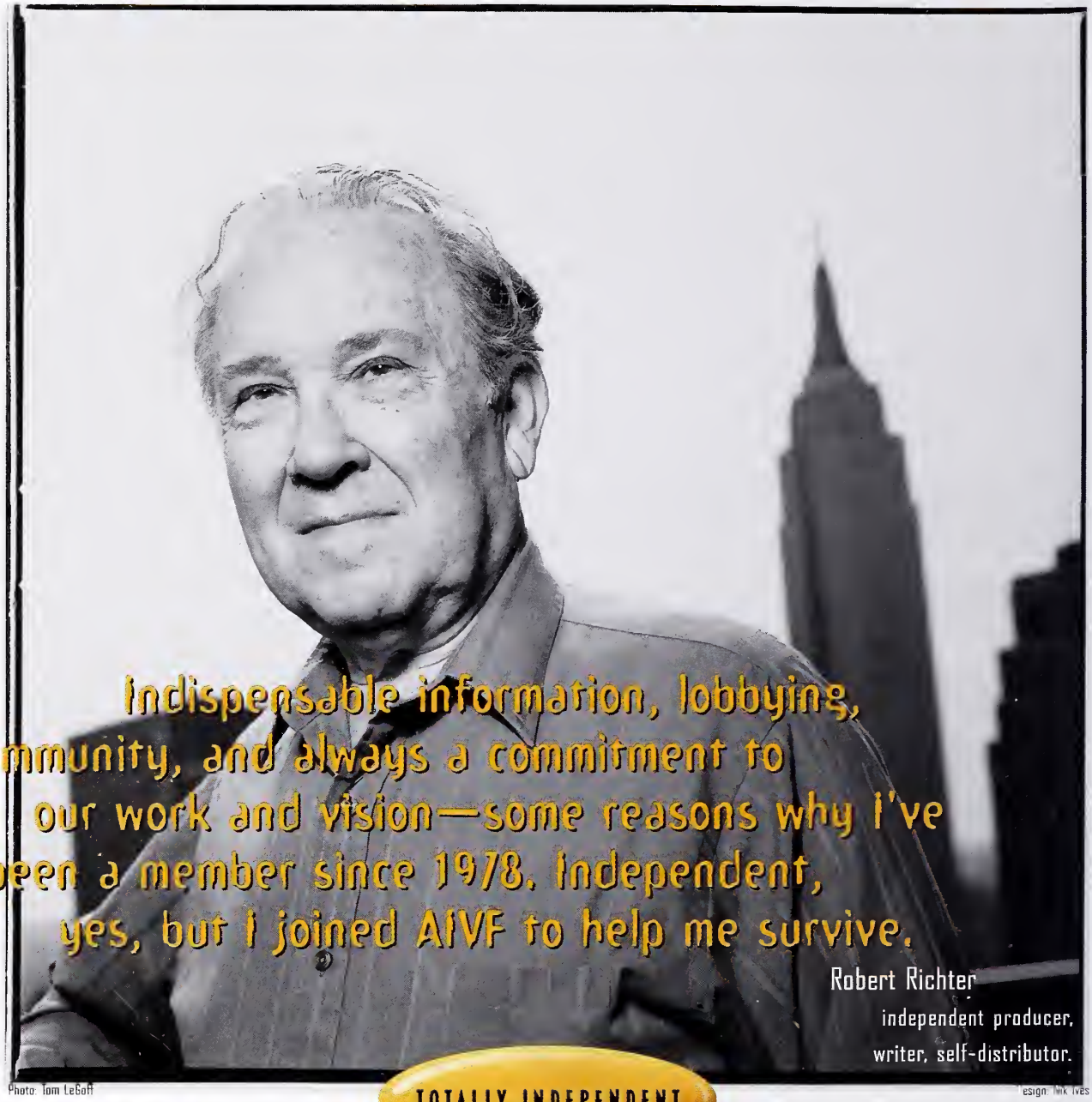


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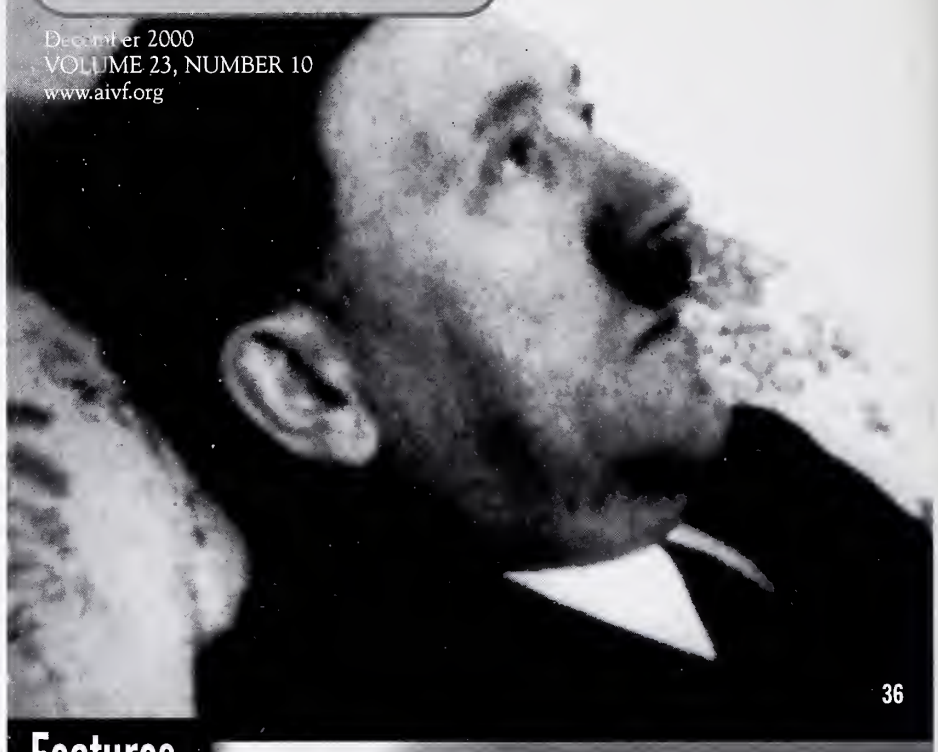
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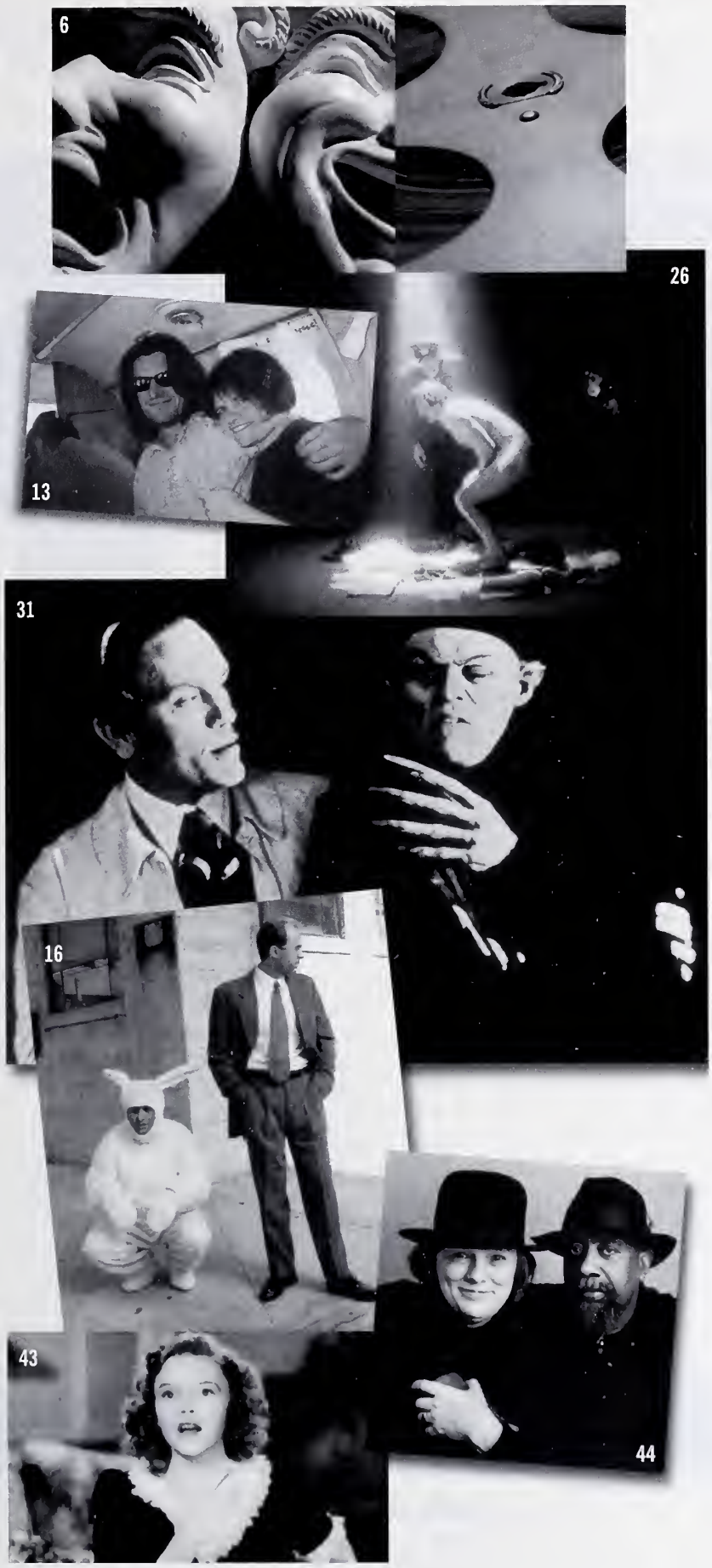
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COVER: Hollywood's images of Jesus Christ, like *King of Kings* (pictured), are part of Jay Rosenblatt's compelling meditation on Christ's Jewishness in the short film *King of the Jews*.



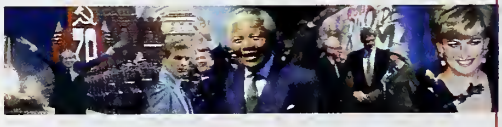


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Criminal Intent

Idaho Republicans try to dim the lights on state public TV.

BY EARLE YOUNG



Defending his station: Peter W. Morrill, general manager of Idaho Public TV.

"EVENTS AND DEPICTIONS *appearing on this IEPBS [the Idaho Educational Public Broadcasting System] that are broadcast for the purpose of providing in-depth news coverage, documentaries and information valuable for Idaho citizens, may at times show acts that, if committed in Idaho in reality, would be violations of Idaho criminal laws. The IEPBS and the Idaho State Board of Education expressly offer such programs as part of IEPBS's highest priority of programming and not for the purpose of promoting, supporting or encouraging the violation of any Idaho criminal statutes."*

"As part of the IEPBS highest priority of programming in broadcast, among other things, in-depth news coverage, documentaries, and information valuable for Idaho citizens, some content may be controversial. IEPBS and the State Board of Education encourage families to exercise decisions as to values important to them to determine whether to watch any IEPBS program. In order to assist families in making the decision, information about programming is available online, by phone, and in writing."

Each of these disclaimers airs twice a day on IEPBS because *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* has so offended the Christian right that the Idaho legislature is threatening to pull the plug on the state's public TV network. Conservative Christians raised a stink in fall of 1999, when Idaho public television first announced the airing of *It's Elementary*. The program, originally scheduled for 8 p.m., was moved to a later time slot, and IEPBS's weekly talk show *Dialogue* was devoted to a rebuttal of the program.

The controversy continued into the 2000 legislative session, where the Joint Finance/Appropriation Committee (JFAC) —the budget writers—cut the network's budget and attached some strings. The directives attached to the appropriation called for the State Board of Education, the actual holders of the network's five broadcast licenses, to "evaluate, establish and enforce fiscal, programming and accountability policies for the [IEPBS]." The legislative intent language says, specifically, "No program shall be broadcast which promotes, supports, or encourages the violation of Idaho criminal statutes." The unspoken intent was to eliminate programs fostering tolerance of homosexuality, in light of the state's anti-sodomy laws.

Republican Sen. Hal Bunderson, who wrote the legislative intent language, said it is not an attempt to censor the network's programming, but rather to prevent it. He said that *It's Elementary* showed only one side of the issue of tolerance of homosexuals. "It said nothing about the death and misery caused throughout the world by the AIDS epidemic and the role of the homosexual lifestyle in the spread of that dreaded virus," Bunderson said.

The State Board of Education is less conservative than the legislature, however. Rather than impose any form of prior restraint on programming, it has insisted on inclusion of the disclaimers, advance notice of the network's schedules, and an accounting of how the programs fit a set of priorities listed in the legislative intent language.

Recently the board reaffirmed the editorial guidelines that have been in place since 1986 and also the national PBS editorial guidelines. IEPBS General Manager Peter Morrill said the legislative directives are unlikely to change the network's programming.

The board's compromise has satisfied no one. The network is saddled with a requirement to report how each of the roughly 3,000 programs aired each quarter matches the legislated priorities. The priorities do not match program categories established in other areas, so the work has to be done from scratch. In addition, Bunderson has said that the board has failed to fully explain the education and public policy mission of the network. The core issue, he said, is where does public television fit into the whole scheme of modern telecommunications?

The legislature controls more than 30 percent of the network's operating budget, and more importantly, the money needed to convert the five broadcast stations to digital signal by a May 31, 2003 deadline. IEPBS asked for $4 million to begin the conversion to digital television, but the legislature appropriated only $2 million. This has delayed some aspects of the conversion and possibly made it more expensive than the $11 million the network had proposed to spend over the next three years. Morrill is asking for $6 million in the 2001 budget, but it is not clear he will get it.

But the battle doesn't end there. After the airing in June this year of *Our House: A Very Real Documentary about Kids of Gay and Lesbian Parents*, IEPBS was under attack again. The Idaho Republican Party at its convention that month called for the privatization of IEPBS. Sen. Mel Richardson, a member of JFAC, was quoted in the *Idaho Statesman* as saying, "I'm not trying to kill public television, but if there's a big audience, let them pay for it." The party's proposal has not addressed who would pay for the conversion to digital.

The problem, Morrill says, is that private entities he has approached about paying for the conversion to digital signals have said that while they are willing to underwrite programming, the license holder (i.e. the State of Idaho) should pay for the upgrade of the facilities. Bunderson has noted that it is unlikely that the legislature would vote to privatize the network, but he expects a vigorous debate over privatization and also the cost and timetable for digital conversion. Anticipating that, Morrill recently asked the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for money to study privatization of the network. Stay tuned.

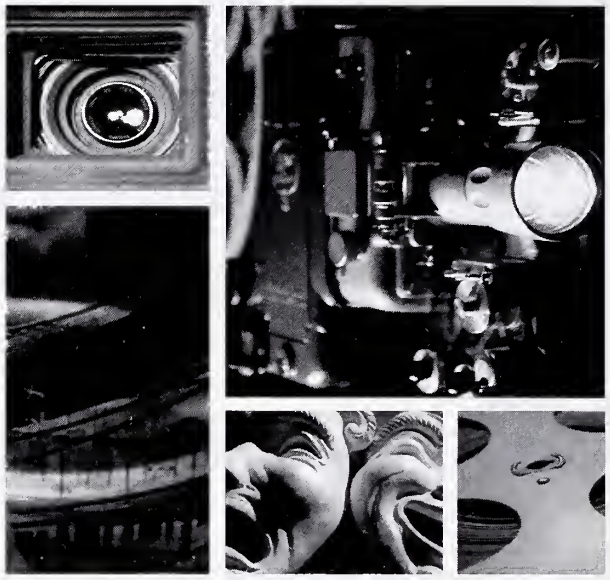
Earle Young is a freelance writer in Boise, Idaho.

GO GETTYER

New Royalty Free Stock Footage Library

BY TAMARA KRINSKY

GETTY IMAGES' RECENT acquisition of stock houses Image Bank and Eyewire now gives filmmakers a new one-stop shop for stock footage of all kinds. While many filmmakers are familiar with the traditional licensing of stock-footage for their films, the lesser known "royalty-free" model of licensing images may be a welcome relief for those on small budget.



From Eyewire's web site, which offers previews of its stock footage bundles.

Image Bank footage can be licensed for use under a traditional "rights-managed model," through which the user purchases a license to the footage for specific usages. However, rights-managed stock footage can often be cost-prohibitive for those on small budgets, with fees varying depending on the type of usage, market, and the length of term of usage.

Of perhaps more interest to independent filmmakers is Eyewire's stock footage, which can be licensed under the "royalty-free" model. This footage tends to be less esoteric and is arranged in previewable collections available for purchase on CD. Examples of titles—previewable on the web—include: *Business Interactions—Type A Personalities Talking Their Way to the Top,* and *Caught in the Act: NY—The Heart of a Big City, Caught on Screen,* each of which is available for purchase for $399 including tax, plus shipping (except in Washington state, where tax is not included). Eyewire charges this one-time fee for the disc, after which the footage contained on it can be used for whatever the owner desires, with a few exceptions that are detailed in the End User License Agreement. (A 30-day full refund policy and a 90-day exchange policy operates.)The exceptions include usages which would be considered defamatory or libelous by a "reasonable person," such as pornographic use or implied endorsement for a particular product or controversial subject without the consent of a featured model or performer. If a filmmaker is at all concerned about their use of stock footage in what could be perceived as a touchy project, he or she should consult an attorney before using the clip.

With all of Eyewire's royalty-free images, there are no additional charges for footage based on the scale of a release. This is a plus for filmmakers whose projects unexpectedly get picked up, whether for theatrical distribution or release in ancillary markets such as cable, DVD, pay television, or video. Another bonus is that there are no additional charges for placing Eyewire images on marketing materials, such as a poster or video box. The cost of the disc is usually much less expensive than the cost of licensing rights-managed footage. However, as with all stock footage, there's no guarantee that hundreds of other filmmakers aren't using the same footage. The user must weigh the cost of going out and shooting original footage against the cost and artistic issues of using images that may appear in other projects.

The most common usage in the past for royalty-free stock footage has been in projects that have narrow audiences or those that don't touch consumers, such as corporate films. According to Eyewire's Public Relations Manager Tabitha Beaton, most of Eyewire's footage customers are multimedia producers, video producers, and broadcast designers. However, with the current popularity of quickly edited material, filmmakers are finding new uses for the kinds of images Eyewire offers. This "MTV" style of editing necessitates the usage of so many images that filmmakers often can't afford the rights-managed model. The possibility of other filmmakers using the images becomes less of an issue due to the fact that images are only onscreen for a brief moment and are therefore harder to recognize. As Internet production increases, the need for more images may open up another market for this kind of footage.

Curtis Sponsler, president/creative director of Animill, an animation graphics company, has used Eyewire images for pieces for television and corporate work. "Many people frown at the idea of using something from a library, but what audiences really want are high quality images regardless of where they come from. I find the real value in using Eyewire footage is getting creative and using it as a resource for constructing and modifying existing images, i.e., as a visual effects element. You can just load the disc onto the server and they're on-line all the time. They have saved me in a pinch many times."

Further info: www.gettyone.com, www.eyewire.com, www.imagebank.com

TAMARA KRINSKY

Tamara Krinsky is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer.

ERRATA

In Thomas White's *Life in a Fishbowl* in the October issue, Lance Loud was incorrectly identified in the photo on p. 34. He is, in fact, the young man standing at the rear of the family. On the same page, the 1983 film *The Louds: An American Family Revisited* was incorrectly ascribed to PBS; it should have been HBO.

In the *In Retrospect* column (p. 64), Toni Treadway and Bob Brodsky (M.A.) should have been included in the 1988 AIVF Indie Awards as recipients of the Kodak Award for Excellence "for their work with super 8 film."

The Independent regret the errors.

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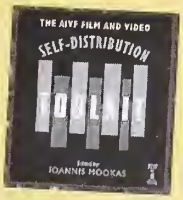
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The mission of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is to increase the creative and professional opportunities for independent video and filmmakers and to ensure and enhance the growth of independent media by providing services, advocacy, and information. In these ways, AIVF promotes diversity and democracy in the communication and expression of ideas and images.

AIVF Founding Principles:

1 The Association is an organization of and for independent video- and filmmakers.

2 The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job, that it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.

3 The Association works, through the combined efforts of the membership, to provide practical, informational, and moral support for independent video- and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival and providing support for the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.

4 The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

5 The Association champions independent video and film as valuable, vital expressions of our culture, and is determined to open, by mutual action, pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

A Kingdom for My Studio: Zoetrope's Virtual Studio

BY BRENDAN PETERSON

IN THE LATE SIXTIES FRANCIS FORD Coppola dreamt of a movie studio where artists could thrive. He imagined a utopian playground that would combine technology, creativity and an open exchange of ideas. With the opening of American Zoetrope in 1969 the dream began. But now, 30 years later, the real possibilities of his vision have arrived. With Zoetrope.com Coppola brings his vision to cyberspace. Launched in June of 2000, the site [www.zoetrope.com] is an entirely web-based and electronic film studio, a place for filmmakers and artists of all types to meet, share ideas, and gather the resources they need to finish their work. Divided into three major sections, including the Artists Buildings, the Producers' Bungalows, and the Common Areas, the interactive site even looks like a movie studio.

"Francis and I talk about how our site is different from all the others because it's made and used primarily by filmmakers," says Zoetrope.com's web master Tom Edgar. "Other web film sites like IFILM just wish they were in movies. And it shows." A writer/director himself, Edgar ensures that the site flows with a filmmaker-friendly interface.

To date over 7,000 users have logged on to submit, read, or discuss screenplays, find crew members in their area, use built-in production tools, and learn about the business and marketing side of filmmaking — an online film school is already in the works. Matt Kelcourse, a veterinary orthopedic surgeon in North Carolina, submitted a script to Zoetrope.com after hearing about the site from a friend. "Now I check Zoetrope daily," says Kelcourse. "My initial expectations were simple. I hoped to learn something from the feedback I got on my script. Almost immediately I heard from other writers around the world. Now I have an agent and two production companies looking at my scripts." (Alliance Atlantis Communications recently optioned two scripts off the site.)

While production deals and representation are sweet rewards for writers and filmmakers, Zoetrope.com is more about inclusion than distribution: anyone with Internet access can join. After reading, and agreeing to a long list of rules that can be summed up as 'be nice and play fair,' artists can start their on-line journey at no cost.



Where's the wine bar?: Zoetrope.com's virtual studio

COURTESY ZOETROPE.COM

The most popular area of the site is probably the Writers Building, which was previously a separate site. [See story in the November 1999 issue of *The Independent.*] For screenwriter James Barrett, connecting with other writers is invaluable. "The discussion boards are an amazing resource. I've asked questions about everything from whether a contest is on the up-and-up to proper documentary formatting. I always receive dozens of helpful answers," says Barrett.

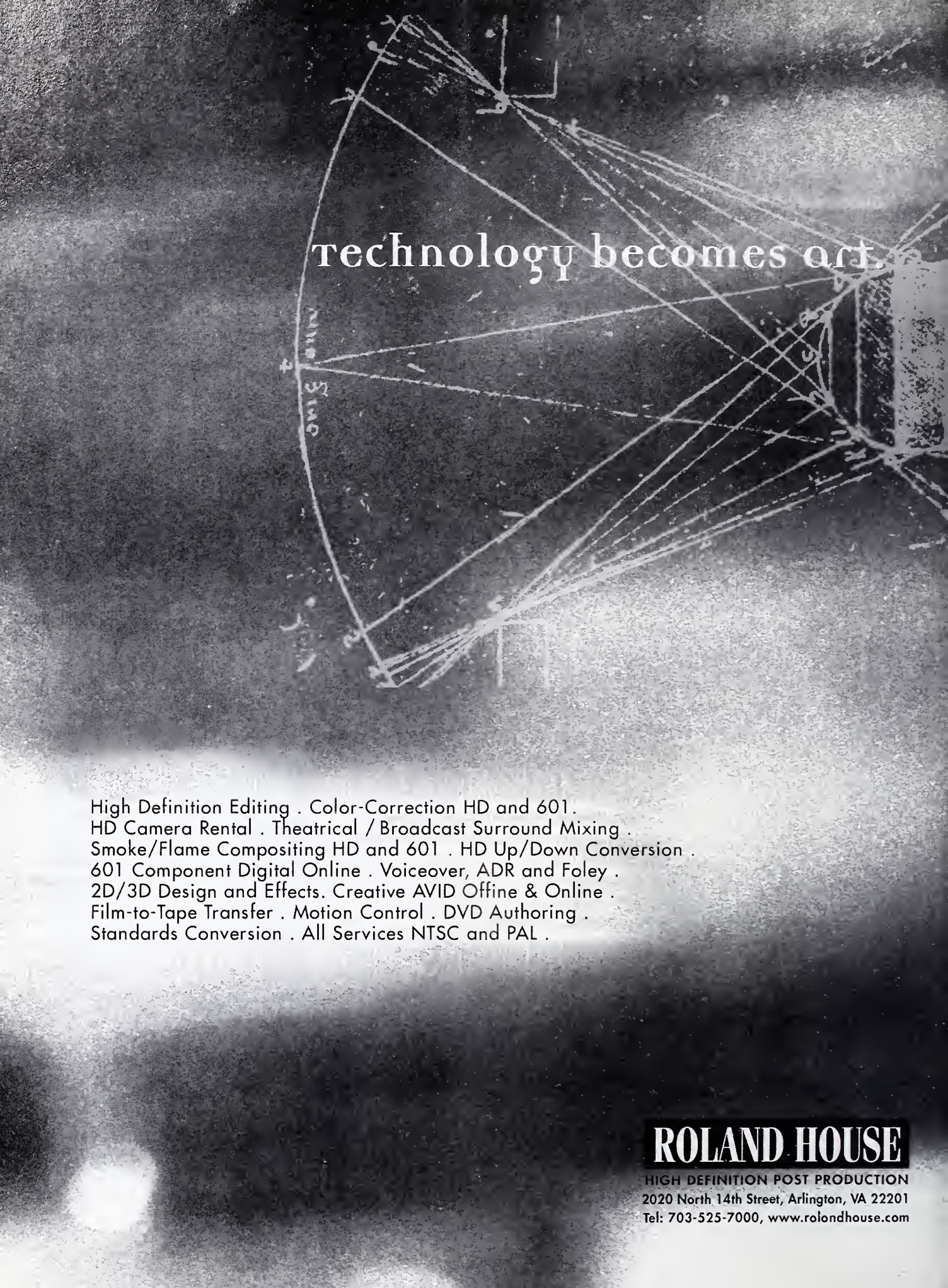
Over in the Producers' Bungalow filmmakers can find collaborators and share files by using a database of actors, musicians, writers, producers, and directors. In addition Zoetrope.com boasts a movie theater, private offices, separate areas for all types of artists and a Studio Store featuring film collectibles, videos, and of course a wide selection of Coppola wine and food. By breaking down the wall of the traditional movie studio, Zoetrope.com is primed to be the Fantasy Island for a family of filmmakers that Coppola once envisioned.

BRENDAN PETERSON

Brendan Peterson [swordfsh@wenet.net] is a freelance writer living in the San Francisco area.

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IFILM, AMC, Oscar, and You



LAST JUNE'S DECISION WAS swift and numbing to those filmmakers who had so recently and enthusiatically premiered their short films on the Internet: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences mandated that web-premiered films would not qualify for Oscar consideration. Like TV and video before it, the Internet presented the Academy with the opportunity to embrace new technologies that allow films to be screened outside the confines of a darkened theater. Once more the Academy has declined, opting instead to preserve the integrity of theatrical motion pictures over what they dub "lone viewing." Then, one short week later, lemonade was squeezed out of the sour announcement through a partnership between exhibitor AMC and web site IFILM. Their series IFILM@AMC will now be screening shorts in Los Angeles area theaters prior to their web debut.

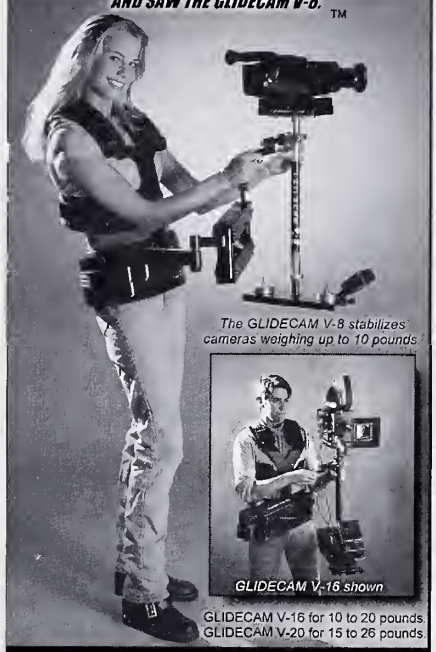
The series kicked off August 15-17, with six films shown to a standing-room only, industry crowd. Each of the subsequent screenings was also either sold out or near capacity. "The first [series] far surpassed our expectations," explains Jon Fitzgerald, former American Film Institute festival director and current VP of programming at IFILM.

Films are compiled into packages of four to six shorts and screened to patrons at an admission discounted from that of a feature. By screening films twice daily for three consecutive days to a paying audience, the IFILM@AMC series complies with Academy requirements to the letter. The future of the series includes a second program in mid-November, plans to continue it next year with quarterly screenings, as well as screenings in New York-area AMC theaters. So, while Academy qualification was the impetus for the series, it is no longer the only factor for film selection. "I think its important that we're not limited to only showing movies that are looking for consideration by the Academy," says Fitzgerald. "I think it's important to recognize that there's a value for filmmakers and for audiences to bring short film to theaters."

SCOTT CASTLE

Scott Castle is the listings editor at The Independent.

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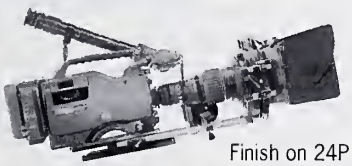
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Deann Borshay Liem

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

BY BRENDAN PETERSON



FOR HER FIRST DOCUMENTARY, DEANN Borshay Liem went in search of herself. The adopted Korean daughter of a white California family, Borshay grew up in a happy, all-American atmosphere. But as she reached adulthood, Borshay Liem wrestled with the mysteries of her early life in Korea, especially after she discovered that she was involved in an identity-swap at the adoption agency and the unexpected fact that her birth parents were alive and well in Korea. *First Person Plural* follows Borshay Liem as she travels to her homeland with her adoptive parents to uncover the truths of her past and forge a new future.

"Growing up watching my father's home movies, I always felt that something was missing. All the shots were beautiful and happy, but not complete," remembers Borshay Liem. "For me making *First Person Plural* was about creating my own sense of truth. So much of my identity, and who I was, had been constructed by other people. It was an identity that I myself bought into. I wanted to use the camera to capture my own perspective."

This was Borshay Liem's first time behind the camera. Nonetheless, she was a well-known entity within the independent film world, having served as the executive director of NAATA (National Asian American Telecommunications Association), one of the five minority consortia funded through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and having been an eloquent spokesperson for NAATA's constituents and independent producers generally. She also co-executive produced Spencer Nakasako's Emmy award-winning documentary *aka Don Bonus* as well as his *Kelly Loves Tony*. Intrigued by the power of these personal stories, Borshay Liem decided to start a video diary about her own cultural confusion, centering on a trip to Korea to visit the biological mother she thought had died.

After premiering at Sundance and earning a Grand Jury Prize at the San Francisco International Film Festival, *First Person Plural* generated major buzz. Now, eight years after the director first picked up the camera, *First Person Plural* is coming to a public television station near you. Produced by the Independent Television Service in association with NAATA, the hour-long documentary is scheduled to air December 18 on *P.O.V.*

All of this attention is a bit shocking for a filmmaker who had never made a movie before. "I had taken a few film workshops and classes, but basically it was all on the job training," admits Borshay Liem. "It was grueling. Not only was I examining every aspect of my life and my family, but I was also learning the filmmaking process. It felt like there was this daily ritual of humiliation, exposing how little I knew about filmmaking."

Her inexperience behind the camera translates into a wide-eyed honesty and emotional accessibility on film that often eludes veteran videomakers. For the opening sequence, Borshay Liem uses a playful interaction between her and her father as he handles a Hi-8 camera for the first time. This simple visual experiment perfectly and profoundly conveys the emotions of the moment.

In addition to mastering the nuts and bolts of first-time filmmaking, Borshay Liem struggled to keep a level of objectivity about her on-screen persona. As writer, director, producer, and subject of the documentary, her ability to stand back from the project and create a character out of herself was at times "crazy making." Nonetheless, Borshay Liem kept the cameras rolling continually, capturing intense and often awkward family interactions. As Borshay Liem recorded these heart-wrenching personal moments, she stayed focused on the very specific audience she had in mind for the video.

"I made this film for my two mothers. There were certain things I wanted to communicate and make clear to them. Other than them, I didn't really think about who would watch the movie," says Borshay Liem. In the end her intended audience was happy. Borshay Liem is closer than ever with her American family, and for the first time her Korean mother has agreed to come visit the United States.

But now there's another audience Borshay Liem is intent on reaching, and that's the world of adoptees. Over the next few months, she's taking her film on the road for a series of screenings with community groups across the country. Working with NAATA, ITVS, the Television Race Initiative, and *P.O.V.*, Borshay Liem hopes that her film will make a difference for people once they've left the theater.

"What I'm trying to do with the national outreach campaign is to create opportunities for diverse communities who have experienced adoption in some way to discuss issues pertaining to race, assimilation, cultural and familial identity, the nature of families, and how families are changing. We can use the film as a starting point to look at those issues."

In addition to engaging the audience in post-screening chats, Borshay Liem has invited representatives from adoption support organizations, Asian-American student groups, and other nonprofits to lend an ear and answer questions. The goal is to connect audience members with each other and to services that may help them deal with their own adoption or identity issues.

For many young filmmakers, the idea of "filmmaking for change" is just a well-intentioned catch phrase. For Borshay Liem, *First Person Plural* was a chance to put her own profoundly personal story on the line and make a difference, one audience member at a time.

Brendan Peterson [swordfsh@mail.wenet.net] is a critic & writer who covers independent film in the San Francisco Bay Area.

COURTESY ITVS; OPPOSITE: PHOTO: JONATHAN KOVEL, COURTESY FILMMAKERS

David Shapiro & Laurie Gwen Shapiro

KEEP THE RIVER ON YOUR RIGHT: A MODERN CANNIBAL TALE

BY AARON KRACH

SCAVENGING THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE'S garbage has long been a favorite pastime of resourceful New Yorkers. Installation artist-turned-documentary filmmaker David Shapiro hit the jackpot five years ago at the corner of 9th Street and Avenue A in the East Village.

"I found a box of books," remember the 35-year-old filmmaker, "some old, crunchy hippie's collection—*On the Road*; *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*; *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Then this book, *Keep the River on Your Right*, by Tobias Schneebaum, which I'd never heard of."

He read the book in one sitting before passing it on to his younger sister, Laurie, a novelist and documentary producer (*The McCourts of Limerick*). The siblings were looking for a film project to collaborate on



and the book became it. Five years later, they were on the festival circuit with the provocative documentary *Keep the River on Your Right: A Modern Cannibal Tale*. In negotiations with a distribution at press time, the film is expected to have a theatrical release in March.

Keep the River on Your Right, the movie, is about Tobias Schneebaum, a New York painter who in 1955 went to Peru on a Fulbright in search of an undocumented tribe called the Harakumbut. He was unheard from for seven months and presumed dead. A year later, Schneebaum walked out of the jungle naked, covered in body paint, and armed with a collection of adventures that would make up his book. Schneebaum had been fully accepted into the Harakumbut tribe and lived as one of them for the year. He took part in all their activities—murderous rampages and ritual cannibalism included. It was his participation in a killing raid that finally inspired him to leave. His memoir turned him into a mini-celebrity. Following the success of his book, Schneebaum segued from painting to anthropology, with an emphasis on the Asmat of New Guinea. During the '70s, he spent several years visiting and living among them, and formed some romantic and sexual relationships. He wrote about his Asmat adventures in a subsequent book, further cementing his reputations as a particularly unorthodox anthropologist.

The Shapiros first considered making a feature film about Schneebaum. "Then by talking to Tobias, we realized there was a documentary in this as well," says Laurie. "He is getting older, and he also has Parkinson's disease, so we decided to put that on hold and make the documentary."

Schneebaum's life story would have been interesting in itself, but David and Laurie wanted to add another layer by taking Schneebaum back to Indonesia and Peru. Schneebaum agreed to go to Indonesia, the site of his Asmat adventures. They find Aipit, Schneebaum's former boyfriend, who is brought to tears by the reunion with his long-lost lover. However, Schneebaum was reluctant to go back to Peru. "He claimed [the people he lived with in Peru] were dead," says David. "He said he wanted to leave things as they were. On the other hand, he's had nightmares every night for the last 40 years."

Through research in New York, the Shapiros uncovered evidence that some of the Harakumbut were still alive. That information convinced Schneebaum to return to Peru. Special precautions were taken in light of his age and precarious health. "We had first aid available and hired local production assistants to walk with Tobias at all times," says Laurie.

She adds, "We knew that our film would benefit from his return to Peru. We knew that was the proverbial 'coming full circle' moment that would give the film a true narrative arc. With five years having passed, we had become very close to Tobias and felt strongly that mentally he would benefit from facing his demons. And now, months later, he agrees that he has."

Locating the survivors in both countries turned out to be the easy part; getting to them was much more difficult. Traveling to the jungle took planes, cruise ships, cars, plenty of walking, and canoes (which were also used for scenic tracking shots). "In Indonesia, we posed as bird watchers and broke the equipment down among four people," says David. "We couldn't afford to get permission to shoot, plus in Indonesia that would have meant having someone sitting on our shoulder. We figured if we went this far, we didn't want to be stopped from shooting in certain places."

"In Indonesia, they stopped us at the airport on the way out," adds Laurie. "The scariest moment came when they wanted to open the film." "That's when we asked if there was a way to change some money," says David, explaining how the simple query led to a quick pay-off and permission to leave the country.

That's probably not something the Shapiros learned in film school (David at Hunter College in New York and Laurie at Syracuse University). Nor did either of those places offer classes in filmmaking with a sibling. "A sense of humor, that's the one thing that got us through," remembers David. "At the end of the day, we could fight like cats and dogs, but we knew we respected each other's intelligence. You have to deal with your brother or sister. You can't fire them."

For further information on *Keep the River on Your Right*, contact: Liferfilms Inc., (212) 982-2644; Liferfilms@aol.com

Aaron Krach is a writer living in New York City.

The Twain Shall Meet

Sony and PBS combine forces on high-def venture.

BY SCOTT CASTLE



(above) Don't try this at home: The crew & host of *The Main Stream* knee-deep in their subject matter.

(below) Cinematographer John Hazard field testing the new Sony HDW-700 high def camera.

SOMETIMES GREAT THINGS START SMALL. Take the Mississippi River. At its headwaters in Minnesota, the Mighty Mississip' is narrow enough to walk across. It gains its massive breadth and strength downstream after innumerable backwaters have fed, cleansed, and renewed it.

The idea to film a journey down the length of this great river began small as well. Roger Weisberg had been wanting to do a film about the Mississippi for some time. Then, as this veteran producer developed the idea, it grew into an endeavor involving two giants—Sony and New York's PBS affiliate WNET. All have come together to create an HDTV-to-35mm project called *The Main Stream*, which trails humorist Roy Blount Jr. down Mississippi as it expands from a trickle to a yawning expanse at the Gulf of Mexico.

Weisberg has a long and distinguished career, having made 20 documentaries for PBS, including *Road Scholar* (1993), which takes Romanian cultural critic Andrei Cordescu down the highways and byways of America. Most recently, Weisberg served as producer on Josh Aronson's *Sound and Fury* (2000), about the debate surrounding cochlear implants for the deaf.

Both features used formats complementary to their subjects. A road movie, *Road Scholar* was shot on 16mm film, while *Sound and Fury* was shot on the more intimate Beta SP. For *The Main Stream*, Weisberg turned to the HDTV format for the combined benefits of quality, availability, and the unique opportunity to test the limits of this much anticipated new technology.

"With this journey down the Mississippi, we knew we had a lot of vistas, landscapes, and water shots that we wanted to look beautiful and cinematic," explains Weisberg. "So when considering a format that was affordable and aesthetically satisfying, HD emerged as a really good choice."

Weisberg approached WNET, which not only became the project's fiscal sponsor and presenting station, but also allowed him to utilize their new HDTV equipment at a reduced cost. WNET had made an recent investment in the emerging technology, purchasing four state-of-the-art Sony HDW-700A cameras. According to Jerry Butler, WNET's vice president and chief technology officer, they chose the model because of its field gear package, which other manufacturers didn't offer, as well as its acquisition rate. "We wanted 1080i acquisition," explains Butler, 1080i being the sum of 1080 interlaced vertical lines, compared with 525 in a standard television picture. "We wanted the highest possible amount of resolution we could get on tape, so that the information would be there no matter what we ultimately did with it." Weisberg and his crew took one of these camera packages down the river, but the station's involvement didn't end there. "We provided the lighting packages, and we're providing finishing facilities and all the transfers and conversions for off-line," says Butler.

Sony's involvment in the project goes beyond manufacturing the camera. The company is transferring the film to 35mm at their Hi Def facility in Culver City, California. Sony will be subsidizing the transfer costs and officials at the company are looking forward to seeing to the quality of the blown-up image and have plans to utilize the film in promoting the format to other filmmakers.

The postproduction plan takes the footage to Beta for an off-line edit before creating an HD master which will used for the all-important and meticulously executed color correction phase. "You can almost relight an entire scene. You can also be so selective about where you want to tweak the colors," Weisberg says, emphasizing the opportunities HD affords in postproduction. "Because it's digital and not analog, you have so much more flexibility, and because you have five to six times the number of pixels than you do compared to a conventional video image—let's say in Beta SP or even Digibeta—you can do so much more. The results are truly impressive." The higher pixel density reduces the jagged edges or aliasing. When viewed on an HD monitor, even thin blades of grass against sunlight reflected on water resist video's inclination to segment the slender diagonal lines.

Such benefits were vital in shooting this verité-style documentary, where the camera is in constant motion and lighting con-

ditions were subject to the whims of the weather. Because of the leeway the camera affords, the dangers of underexposure became minimal. "If you even slightly underexpose an image in high def, you can bring out all of those highlights so amazingly and beautifully in the postproduction process," says Weisberg. "It's only if you dramatically overexpose an image that you've really lost the highlights for good and no amount of color correction can recover them."

The benefits of the camera's low-light capabilities shine through on scenes shot inside the river's houseboats, which are reliant on skylights for illumination. Another indoor scene that exemplifies the camera's possibilities took place in a long hall where the light source was a window at the opposite end. The walls of this reputedly haunted house were painted a deep red, yet the camera captured the subject's face without tinting it orange or losing details of facial expression in the murky shadows.

John Hazard, *The Main Stream*'s cinematographer, is reluctant to put too much emphasis on the format itself. "The choice of my instrument, in a sense, is incidental," notes Hazard. But he notes, "If I have to liken shooting high definition video to shooting film, it's as though I were shooting reversal film as opposed to shooting negative," he explains, pointing out that, like reversal, details in high def are lost when overexposed. "I'm able to think more like a film cameraman. It allows me to stop thinking about the camera altogether and concentrate on the problems at hand like: Where should my next shot come from?"

Weisberg hopes to shepherd *The Main Stream* to festivals after the transfer to film is complete, with an eye of securing theatrical distribution before its PBS airdate (following the model of *Road Scholar*). So when this document of the mighty river arrives on the big screen, it will be a welcome opportunity to see how Sony high def translates to 35mm. The footage is truly startling in its clarity when seen on an HDTV monitor, but the new medium's capabilities will be truly put to the test when the Mississippi is projected as large as life.

Scott Castle is a freelance writer and the listings editor at The Independent.

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The Toronto International Film Festival

BY PAUL POWER



Clockwise from top left: Time heals old wounds: from Shinji Aoyama's mesmerising *Eureka*.

Hop to it: from Mia Trachinger's *Bunny*

Soprano Sharon Sweet as Princess Turandot lifts the roof off the Forbidden City in Allan Miller's *The Turandot Project*.

IN THE WEEK BEFORE THE SYDNEY OLYMPICS, the city of Toronto was festooned with banners urging us to "Support Toronto's 2008 Olympic bid." If Toronto is entertaining notions to catapult itself onto the world sporting stage in order to match its arch-rival Montréal, it need have no worries about its film festival, which has well and truly arrived. This year's 25th edition of the Toronto International Film Festival (Sept. 7-16) screened 328 films from 56 countries and reaffirmed Toronto's position as one of the world's top five festivals. Roger Ebert, in an opinion piece in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* early in the week, proclaimed it to be "better than Cannes."

Although Cannes has grown into an unwieldy market and screening circus, it remains the prime showcasing and deal-making forum for filmmakers in Europe. Toronto, however, truly is a festival for lovers of film. On several occasions in falafel shops or at the city's ubiquitous hot sausage carts, I ran into individuals who were taking their annual holidays at the festival. They were comparing viewing notes and, like O.T.B. regulars checking out each others' daily wins, would ask what my running total of films viewed was, only to shrug and reply that they were "averaging five, five and a half a day."

On the flip side though, there's a hard-nosed business aspect to the festival which is a prime arena for specialty distributors and producers to showcase some serious material after a summer of popcorn movies, effectively kicking off the fall festival circuit. Although it is the first festival after Cannes where any kind of serious horse-trading goes on, there's no formal market aspect to Toronto, so deals occur in suites at the Hyatt, Hilton, and Four Seasons hotels as well as some of the swanky eateries in the Yorkville area where the festival is based.

So there are two ways to approach the festival: to pick and choose a select few screenings, peppered with press conferences, and industry sessions, or to immerse yourself in screenings from dawn 'til dusk, as I did.

Opinion was divided this year on the quality of films on show. There were no real break-out films like last year's hits, *Boys Don't Cry* and *American Beauty*. Apart from Lions Gate's aggressive acquisition spree, buyers generally remained cautious, with checkbooks firmly tucked in pockets, a result perhaps of U.S. offerings generally being quite slim in terms of substance or style, although there was plenty of fine foreign fare to see.

Lions Gate's pre-festival announcement that it was buying Trimark Pictures and its acquisition of online Cinemanow.com immediately after Toronto were mirrored by the distributors' spate of film buys during the festival, some of which caused a few eyebrows to be raised. Most noteworthy in this regard was *Vulgar*, the hyped debut feature from Bryan Johnson and the most recent offering from Kevin Smith's View Askew stable (Smith served as executive producer). The story is a fairly threadbare one—a children's party clown (Brian O'Halloran) needs to make more money than afternoons of balloon-twisting will bring him, so he decides to become a transvestite clown called Vulgar and entertain at bachelor parties. A grim encounter with a sordid family of rapists and pedophiles leads to a puerile blackmail/revenge tale with poor production values, little of substance in the way of story, and the type of rapid-fire dialogues which, for better or for worse, characterize Smith's films. One can only wonder if the acquisition was part of a Faustian bargain that Lions Gate made with Smith et al for taking on *Dogma* last year, as *Vulgar* is so lacking in any sort of redeeming qualities, one wonders why it was picked up at all. At the festival Lions Gate also picked up Kathryn Bigelow's flashback-thriller *The Weight of Water*, which met with mixed and mostly muted responses, and Alejandro González Iñarritu's visceral triptych *Amores Perros*, expanding an already burgeoning slate for next year.

Other U.S. features in the Discovery section had a quieter time of it, including the directing debut from Artistic License Films president Sande Zeig. *The Girl* is a doomed lesbian love story set in Paris:

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY FESTIVAL; *THE TURANDOT PROJECT* PHOTO: HEATHER GREER

enigmatic artist falls for quirky and impetuous bisexual nightclub singer, who's caught up in a nest of vipers. Although beautifully shot by George Lechaptois, and with a fine score from Richard Robbins reminiscent of Miles Davis' for Louis Malle's *Lift to the Scaffold*, the film's theme of *amor fou* ends up becoming a little too overstated. Mia Trachlinger's *Bunny*, a moving tale of alienation, follows two recent Eastern European immigrants to the U.S. who find employment through the city of Los Angeles as part of a troupe of "professional empathisers." Dressed in pink and white furry bunny suits, they spend their days squatting like rabbits on street corners, listening to the worries and concerns of passers-by who talk to, stroke, or even hug the bunnies, in a sort of primal therapy. It's a disquieting film, allegorical of the isolation that many immigrants experience, while the workers in their bright bunny costumes are a stark contrast with the tearful tales that they hear every day, absorbing sadness like sponges and forbidden by their employers to interact in any way with those pouring their hearts out to them.

Other more established directors had their Difficult Second Film on show. James Gray's *The Yards*, a Queens-set corruption film based on a true story about the seamy underbelly of payoffs for public transportation contracts, was a solid second effort, simmering along at a steady pace through the grimy stockyards of Queens and suburban New York, erupting with periodic spurts of controlled violence and anguished passion. Joaquin Phoenix once again stands out as a brooding young Turk, whose headstrong enthusiasm brings the whole operation crumbling down around him. *Before Night Falls*, Julian Schnabel's follow-up to *Basquiat*, takes its title from the first novel by Cuban poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas, whose homosexuality and writings led to his imprisonment and censorship in his home country. Schnabel manages to convey the carefree lives Arenas and his young friends led in pre-Castro days, with delightfully shot sweeps of desaturated color landscape and powerful performances from his cast, particularly Javier Bardem playing Arenas.

By far, however, the film that still lingers and haunts the most was Shinji Aoyama's *Eureka*, which was disparagingly dismissed

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Family reconciliation in Vietnam as captured in Beth B's *Breathe In Breathe Out*.

Julian Schnabel (r) on the set of *Before Night Falls* with Johnny Depp.

in advance by some as being a black and white, Japanese film nearly four hours in length. The film is a mesmerizing, exquisitely measured meditation on the nature of loss, loneliness, and alienation. Three characters are thrown together by tragic circumstances and find that they need each other to come through the trauma that they've collectively experienced. Beautifully shot in a sepia hue by Masaki Tamura, the film's pacing is expertly judged, slowly drawing us in to these shattered lives and gradually impressing on us the time required for healing. By a long shot, *Eureka* was the standout film of the festival and, while its length might make it an unwieldy release, is one of those rare treasures that festivals unearth.

News of *Baise Moi* (*Fuck Me*) the festival's *cause scandale*, as it was described to me, had spread from its first showing early on and by the time of Monday's screening, yet another long line for rush tickets had appeared. This nihilistic mishmash of elements from *Thelma and Louise* could be better termed *Natural Porn Killers*. Co-directed by Virginie Despentes (from her novel) and former porn actress Coralie Trinh Thi, this was an aimless gore-and-fuckfest which was little short of a conventional porn flick, and included a nasty gang rape scene of one of the female protagonists which included actual scenes of penetration. When quizzed by the audience on the difference between their film and a porno, Trinh Thi answered "you can't masturbate to our film." Despentes explained that, being fans of punk rock and speed metal music, the directors wanted to make a film that had the same nihilistic sensibilities. Unfortunately their soundtrack didn't even bear this out, and a cheesy score, added to poor production values, further cheapened the whole effect.

The festival's Real to Reel documentary section turned up some of the festival's more interesting films. Cashing in on the success of *Buena Vista Social Club*, *Calle 54* was a delight for a Latin jazz lover (like me), but with only director Fernando Trueba's brief and inconsequential commentary for the first hour between five, six, and eight-minute studio-recorded tunes, the overall effect was of watching a Latin jazz concert that an enthusiastic friend had brought you to. Visually and musically the blend of styles is infectious, but when delivered in such large, crudely edited dollops like this, may find an appreciative audience hard to come by. At the other end of the musical spectrum, Allan Miller's *The Turandot Project* was an intriguing look at the preparations behind the staging of Puccini's opera "Turandot" in Beijing's Forbidden City. With Zhang Yimou on board as director of the opera's visual aspects, the film charts the triumphs and tensions (Zhang noted how he was doing this project only to make China look good), resulting in a visual and musical spectacle.

One would think that 25 years after it ended the Vietnam war would throw up few surprises. Even fine recent documentaries such as *Regret to Inform* and *Return with Honor* are worthy if not startling additions to the canon. However Beth B's *Breathe In Breathe Out* proved that Vietnam still has depths left to plumb. The filmmaker, in a surprisingly straight-ahead production, followed three vets to Vietnam for their first return there since the war. What made B's film interesting, however, was that the vets were accompanied by their offspring, some of whom hadn't ever had a proper relationship with their father because of the war. By gently listening, B is able to capture heart-rending confessions from the vets, whose healing process had as much to do with their tattered relationship with their kids as with the shattered selves that the war spewed out. Another war documentary, Heddy Honigmann's *Crazy*, was a sobering look at the trauma that non-combat troops undergo. The director visited several Dutch former U.N. peacekeeping troops—an oxymoron, if ever there was one—who had served in the Congo, Rwanda, Korea, Cambodia, Lebanon, and the Balkans. Honigmann used the unique unifying theme of music, getting her subjects to play the song that was most evocative of their time abroad, while holding the camera on her subjects for the often painful duration of the song. What emerged were chilling stories of helplessness as troops permitted executions and child prostitution to occur literally under their eyes, all the while only a step away from a stray bullet, mortar, or mine, and unable to shoot back. An army colonel, whose brow visibly moistened as he recounted his Bosnian and Lebanese experiences, explained how Seal's song "Crazy" was the only thing that made sense amidst the madness.

Perhaps when the world's athletes descend on Toronto in 2008, the name of this year's triathlon winner, Canadian Simon Whitfield, will be a mere golden glimmer. The other show in town—the 33rd Toronto International Film Festival—will still be the premier venue for the best in new world cinema.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.

NEW NAME, SAME OLD MARKET

The Independent Feature Project Market

BY SCOTT CASTLE & PAUL POWER



The market expo at New York's famous Puck Building, where the elite meet for technological treats.

FRESH FROM ITS SUCCESSFUL MAKEOVER LAST year as a slimmed-down version of what was becoming a slightly unwieldy event, the Independent Feature Project Market (Sept. 15-22) this year included a name change as well as adding a video screening venue at the Lower East Side's Pioneer Theatre. The format for this twenty-second market was basically the same as before—screenings, seminars, and parties.

Away from the posters, postcards, business cards, and flyers that littered the Angelika Cinemas screenings area, the market staged a number of useful panels, seminars, and face-to-face sessions at the Puck Building with individuals who might come in handy for finishing/distributing your first film, or looking at subsequent projects. The panels also offered an interesting snapshot of the current state of play in the field and the personalities who are pulling the strings. Judging by the attendances at these panels and the tidal waves of filmmakers who launched themselves, flyers in hand, upon the panelists at the end of each seminar, these were the sessions that are almost worth the admission fee alone (although next year IFP might consider running smaller workshops as well). *The Independent* attended a number of panels during the market week, and here's a look at some of what was on offer:

"Shorts: The Real Deal on Money"

For all the trumpeting of shorts' successes in recent years, the outlets—and financial returns—are improving, but still slim. An interesting-looking panel, with reps from TV (Sundance Channel, IFC, Sci-Fi Channel) and dotcoms (Atom, Mediatrip, Urbanmedia, Reelshort) ended up dodging the issue here however, bobbing and weaving through a series of audience questions seeking specific answers (as the seminar title promised) to the age-old "how much for my film?" While it all depends on the film, the panel was frustratingly nebulous about dollars and cents, with only Gene Klein of Reelshorts.com offering any specific figure, via a cautionary note: If someone is offering you between four and ten grand, you can bet that you either have a hit short on your hands, or that HBO is chasing it. *George Lucas in Love*, was lauded as the Holy Grail of shorts and was mentioned more times than I care to remember. New approaches the panelists offered for greater exposure of shorts included getting shorts paired with features theatrically, packaged on videos and DVDs, and playing in other venues such as elevators, hotel rooms, and cinema foyers. Room service, anyone?

Atom's Ann Rossellini noted how, if you're looking for big money, TV markets are finite: there are only 70 buyers worldwide for shorts and only about 30 of these buy more than five or ten short titles a year. Many are picked up at Clermont Ferrand, the French short fest that moderator Jean-Michel Dissard termed "the Cannes of short film—without the palm trees." A lot of larger international festivals will disqualify films already broadcast or shown on the Internet, and Mediatrip's Patrick Lynn counseled makers to look at the fine print of festival applications to see if they permit the organizers to screen part or all of your short in an on-line fest venue.

PAUL POWER

"Why Put Your Movie on the Net?"

Like a good therapist, this panel didn't so much answer the question as pose another: 'Why *not* put your movie on the net?' The success stories the panel did provide certainly were impressive, including the two million viewings and CAA deal secured by the creators of *405* and director Andrew Gurland's New Line deal for *Black People Hate Me and They Hate My Glasses* (both from IFILM). But while stellar results like these are still the exception and not the rule ("We know it's going on on a daily basis, we just can't give you any examples," defended Reel Play's Rachel Shapiro), the fact remains that without the Internet's lottery-like possibilities the outlook for widespread shorts distribution is still pretty grim. As Jim Steele of ShowbizData.com so delicately put it, "Where else is your short going to go?"

As sobering as such straight talk may have been to a room full of filmmakers with their celluloid or digital lottery ticket in tow, the panel did delivery some good advice on navigating the labyrinth of dotcom content providers. Sound advice included: "Get your short on as many sites as possible;" "Get a lawyer involved before you negotiate finances;" "Have an on-line promotion strategy;" "Consider shooting choices which translate well to streaming viewing;" and "Keep contract lengths short."

The instability exhibited by the recent demises of DEN, Pop, and Pseudo plagued

PHOTOS P. 20-23 COURTESY IFP

the minds of the panelists as did the horizon-chasing promise of eternally evolving technologies. The panel warned again not to give your content, er, film away for free before reminding you again that the answer to the titular question was "Why not?"

SCOTT CASTLE

"HBO Case Study: Three Paths to Success"

While one of the three paths was not "Pitch your project to HBO in the middle of the panel," that's exactly what happened, with the Q&A quickly degenerating into a pitch session, much to the chagrin of everyone else in attendance. But while the panel diverged from the three paths during the discussion, it still yielded some noteworthy advice, mostly about obtaining music rights for broadcast. To wit: Don't interview documentary subjects while popular music plays in the background, learn the definition of the legal term "Fair Use," and, when in doubt, talk to [HBO's] lawyers. In the end, the best warning/ advice came from *The Target Shoots First* director Chris Wilcha, who observed that, "The entire surface of the world is copyrighted in some way."

SC

"Deconstructing Public TV"

For initiates, this was a good primer to see where $300 million of public monies goes: reps from CPB, PBS, ITVS, plus two "signature series," *P.O.V.* and *American Masters*, moderated by filmmaker Jennifer Fox, explained their organization's activities, application processes, and let the audience know what they were and weren't looking for. New PBS head, Pat Mitchell, was credited with introducing an easier submission process, advocating the TV half-hour (as well as shorter segments) as something PBS should look into, making the public broadcasting system more Web-friendly, and establishing a new structure of regional content VPs. Some figures were staggering: *P.O.V.* annually selects eight to ten projects (the figure is set to increase) from 600 submissions; ITVS's LiNCS funds two per cent of applicants; while PBS gets 3,000 applications for funding per annum. However, questions about the application, selection, and

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Reel Lifers: Participants at the HBO panel.

notification processes elicited few concrete response from the panelists who referred the audience to www.pbs.org for details.

PP

"Reality Programming: Fact and Fiction"

Although it's readily apparent that the American public doesn't question the ethics of inserting an uncredited recreation into a doc, it doesn't mean the makers and gatekeepers don't take it seriously. This panel, comprised mostly of reps from cable channels dealing in docs, attempted to focus on the blurred line between documentaries and entertainment. "The fiction aspect of documentary may be making a profit [from them]," remarked Gary Lico, president of Cable READY, wryly.

The limitations of the vast American market are set by the choices of its viewers not by the programmers, argued several panelists. But documentarian Beth B. retorted that it's the homogenization of community and the isolation of people who've drawn their influences from television that's really to blame. In short, all those empty calories from shows like *Scariest Police Chases 7* and *Survivor* have made viewers too full for a nutritious meal. So enticing viewers toward docs too often means going with the marquee ingredients. When one filmmaker argued that their film isn't about violence, but rather about sex, panel moderator Simon Nasht, executive producer of Gabriel Films, sighed and replied, "Oh, the other one." Hardly the answer doc makers were searching for. With a panel that included Court "All Crime All the Time" TV and advice on the importance of making hot stories "hotter," expect more candy and titillation before dinner.

SC

"Evaluating Your Rough Cut: Knowing When Your Film is Really Finished"

This panel, moderated by Next Wave head Peter Broderick, tried to cajole attendees into becoming better editors of their own films and not be constrained by the sacredness of their own footage. Their advice: Don't be held down by the script or remain married to scenes that, as attached as you may be to them, don't help the film. Be ready to cut. "Out of 500 films [submitted to Next Wave], none of them were too short," declared Broderick, in all seriousness. (Next Wave only selected three films from that total.)



Outside the Angelika, the place to be in mid-September.

The subject of test screenings to determine a film's readiness was also addressed in some detail. The first golden rule: hold the crew screening at a later date. For a real test screening, invite those who can help move the film forward: folks with money, film festival programmers, distributors, press, and anyone else who can help get the film an audience. Second, of the two kinds of screening evaluations—questionnaire and discussion—the first provides audiences with the anonymity required to be critically honest, while the latter allows for more in-depth analysis. Finally, if your trailer isn't as good as you believe your final cut's going to be, don't show it to people. Always remember to use your first impressions wisely.

SC

Paul Power and Scott Castle are, respectively, managing editor and listings editor at The Independent.

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The Freedom to Shop

An Option to the Option Agreement

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

WHEN WRITERS TAKE THEIR SCRIPTS INTO the marketplace, they often encounter producers who cannot afford to purchase the rights. The producer—frequently independent and undercapitalized—may instead offer to "option" the script by paying the writer a sum of money for the exclusive right to take the script "off the market" for a fixed period of time. And so begins the ritualistic dance in which a producer offers as little money as possible for an option term that is as long as possible.

Taken to an extreme, the producer may offer "no money down" or $1 options for a period of 18 months, renewable at a producer's discretion for an additional eighteen months for no or some nominal sum of money. So why would a writer accept an option that could tie up his or her work for three years with little or no cash in return?

It's not insanity. Many writers have discovered that it's a buyer's market, with too many scripts in circulation and not enough producers. Producers serve as advocates, championing a script when they submit it to financial sources—which, most times, the writer wouldn't otherwise have access to. If the producer has produced several projects, that track record might impress potential funding sources or, if that producer has produced a somewhat financially successful project, then he or she can return to prior funding sources or attract new financiers.

So the writer must judge: Should the script join that producer's ever-growing development slate? Does the producer really have that "passion" and a relatively good ratio of projects that have been in development to those that were eventually produced?

RECENTLY, A NEW TWIST HAS BEEN ADDED to the picture: the "shopping" agreement. This is an arrangement whereby a producer pays no option money and is given the right to submit a writer's script to specific financiers. As part of the shopping agreement, the producer must provide a list of the funding sources he or she will approach— studios, independent distributors that can finance a project in whole or in part, larger production companies, reputable foreign sales agents, and such "end users" as network, cable, or syndicated television and video companies. Additional funding sources could be added periodically. The point is, the writer knows exactly to which parties a producer has submitted a project—a feature usually absent in the conventional option agreement.

In the shopping agreement, pre-negotiated terms may be replaced by the right of the producer and writer separately to negotiate his or her own arrangement with a financing source.

What's more, unlike the usual option agreement, the shopping agreement may be either exclusive or nonexclusive with a particular producer. If nonexclusive, the writer or other parties may submit the script to their own respective funding sources. This creates a level of freedom for the writer and a degree of competitive pressure for the producer that can help speed a script's development along. Obviously, it is important that everyone informs each other and coordinates their efforts to prevent duplicate submissions and confusion.

Another feature of the shopping agreement is that its term is usually for a shorter period of time than a regular option agreement—that is, for three to six months, as opposed to a year or more. This helps motivate producers to get feedback from funding sources in a relatively short amount of time. (As always, there can be loopholes written into the agreement. If, for instance, a producer is in the midst of negotiating a proposal with a potential funding source as the shopping agreement term expires, a provision in the agreement should permit an extension until the producer's negotiations have concluded, one way or the other.)

Due to the short term of the shopping agreement, the producer may insist on a provision that bars the writer from approaching the listed funding sources for a certain period of time (e.g., six to 12 months) without the producer's consent. Writers can limit the scope of this non-circumvention provision, however, by permitting the writer to approach these funders during this period without the producer's consent if the writer brings a new or changed element to the project. This would include the addition of a "name" actor or director.

Another major difference between the standard option and the shopping agreement lies in the area of pre-negotiated terms—the script's purchase price, a writer's credit and compensation, the rights granted, and any right to participate in such "spin offs" as sequels and television series.

Problems can develop if the writer has an unrealistic sense of his or her script's value in the marketplace.

In regular option agreements, such terms are fully negotiated and stated in the option agreement, which both parties sign. If a producer exercises the right to purchase the script, the producer and writer are bound by the terms of the agreement.

In the shopping agreement, such pre-negotiated terms may be replaced by the right of the producer and the writer to negotiate his or her own arrangement with a financing source. For instance, the writer could negotiate the underlying rights to his or her script or writing services, while the producer is simultaneously negotiating for his or her production services. This absence of prenegotiated terms permits a writer to negotiate a possibly more favor-

able deal.

It also can create problems, however. Since the producer cannot simply present pre-established terms to any funding source, his or her ability to fund and produce a project is subject to the ability of the writer and a funding source to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. If the writer and the financier cannot reach an agreement—whether because of a lack of communication, or the writer having an unrealistic sense of his or her script's value in the marketplace, or some other stumbling block—the producer's deal cannot be concluded successfully.

There are several ways to address this issue. The shopping agreement may include a provision in which the parties agree to negotiate their respective deals in good faith concerning such terms as the producer's and writer's compensation and credit. The agreement could also state that if the financier offers the writer an agreed-upon minimum amount or "floor" payment for the acquisition of rights to the script and/or the writer's services, then the writer would have to accept this proposal.

Writers may question why there is an emphasis on a writer's ability to reach an agreement. On a pragmatic level, similar provisions applying to the producer could be included in a shopping agreement. However, it's industry custom for producers to approach funding sources with established parameters for the acquisition of rights to a script. Producers may be reluctant to enter into shopping agreements without that comfort level or certainty. Writers can argue, however, that the absence of such pre-negotiated terms is the trade-off for the producer receiving a free option.

Finally, the shopping agreement usually states that the failure of the producer or writer to reach an agreement with a financier would not constitute a breach of the agreement, provided that each has negotiated in good faith.

Whether a shopping agreement is the right choice will depend on the intentions and flexibility of the writer and producer as they deal with one another in attempting to reach a common goal: to finance a project based on the writer's script.

Robert L. Seigel [Rlsentlaw@aol.com] is a NYC entertainment attorney and a partner in the Daniel, Seigel & Bimbler, LLP law firm which specializes in the representation of clients in the entertainment and media areas.

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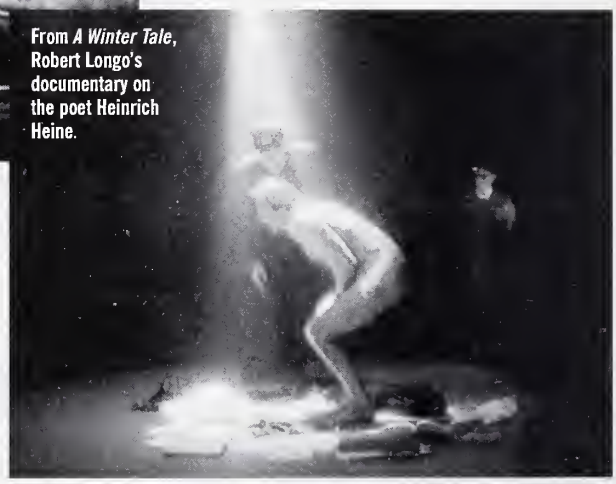


Arte's Mark

Inside the French/German cultural channel.

BY CLAUS MUELLER





From *A Winter Tale*, Robert Longo's documentary on the poet Heinrich Heine.

SINCE ITS FIRST BROADCAST in 1992, Arte has become the most innovative television programmer in Europe. Its attraction is due to a creative programming philosophy unhampered by commercial considerations. Apparently simple issues are presented in depth from original perspectives and, conversely, complex matters are made comprehensible without undue simplification.

Arte funding is one of the better-kept secrets among independents. But it's worth investigation, because cost considerations, niche programming, and the internationalization of upscale television have made European funding more accessible and programming trends better understood. More U.S. independent directors can certainly benefit from this shift. As producer Peter Friedman puts it, "Arte is the most filmmaker-friendly and least risk-averse TV channel in the world. [B]e patient and persistent, but not pushy."

Arte was the first European channel to offer theme nights (or in Arte's parlance, 'topical evenings'), which have since become Arte's trademark and a device borrowed by other European stations. More than 1,000 theme nights have been produced since 1992. Anything concerning the public can become the focus for a theme night, consisting of three or four hours of programming which can be a mix of documentaries, feature films, expert discussions, essays, and other formats. Sunday nights is generally designed for family viewing. Tuesdays are given to art, theater and literature. Thursday is the night to analyze social, political, and economic issues from a European perspective.

Scheduled during primetime and throughout Arte's line-up are documentaries contextualizing events and news stories. Among the most successful are those dealing with history and World War II (leading to the trade quip that whenever one sees a swastika on the screen, it must be on Arte). Arte's film programming includes independent productions and favors auteur and high-end niche titles. To date Arte has co-financed or acquired numerous American independent documentaries and bought indie feature films, but not yet provided production funds for fiction features.

Independents wishing to become part of Arte's line-up should be aware of certain basic parameters. When dealing with co-productions and acquisitions, Arte applies similar considerations for theme nights, documentaries, and features. First films are acceptable, but the director must have a producer with an established track record. Ideally the topic must be European or have an appeal to European audiences. Most importantly, U.S. independents have to establish a personal relationship with Arte's commissioning editors or executives. This may prove difficult, since the channel has no U.S. presence, but it's not impossible, if a producer is willing to travel to the many international cofinancing forums and markets.

Opening Arte's portal

Arte's organizational structure is unique, very complex, decentralized, and rather fluid. So it should come as no surprise that there is no standard model for pitching a project. In general, productions are proposed to a commissioning editor or executive at La Sept or one of the participating German public television stations. If the concept is appealing and fits Arte standards, this broadcaster in turn presents it to the program conference in Strasbourg, which must approve it. This holds for all program categories, including the arts, drama, documentaries, and theme nights.

Overall control of the theme nights stays with the commissioning television station and is rarely given over to an outside producer. However, producers can submit ideas for a project that might fit into a particular theme night, once these themes have been established. Ideas can also be proposed directly to senior executives in Strasbourg, which produces about 10 theme nights and 15 documentaries a year. Strasbourg may choose to accept the idea or relay it back to an Arte commissioning editor at a particular station.

American independents have found many roads to Arte. Markus Gieppner, a German-American producer/director based in New York, approached Laurent, chief of Strasbourg's documentary section, with the concept for *18B Justice*. This is a documentary about a publicly funded private investigator in New York who helps indigent defendants. Laurent referred him

COURTESY ICON PICTURES

to a commissioning editor at ZDF, who after the customary half-year delay, committed to half the funding.

Then there's the case of Robert Longo, an American artist/director with a WDR/Arte commitment who was able to work through an American production company. Longo signed on to direct A *Winter Tale*, a documentary about the German poet Heinrich Heine, based on a script by the German playwright Klaus Pohl. Once WDR demonstrated interest, Longo went in pursuit of a production company to work with, which ended up being the New York based ICON Pictures.

Still others have found their single idea blossoming into a much bigger affair. Such was the case with producer/director Jane Weiner. A veteran producer who had prior expérience working with Arte, Weiner proposed the theme of "La Douleur" ("The Pain") to Strasbourg headquarters, which passed it on to La Sept. Ultimately ZDF took charge of the program. She produced the required documentary, working closely with ZDF's commissioning editor, and structured the whole evening at ZDF's request—an editorial freedom rarely enjoyed by Arte's producers. ZDF then asked her to develop a theme night on the topic "Lost & Found." After her proposal was accepted by the programming conference in Strasbourg, she executive produced three new productions for the evening, one of which she directed, along with the *habillage* (the opening, closing, and interstitual segments of a theme night). Working with ZDF's commissioning editor, she also acquired a fourth documentary to fill out the evening.

Just the Facts

Arte is a unique upscale German-French cultural channel that operates with two halves straddling two countries: Headquartered in Strasbourg, the channel combines La Sept Arte in France, and Arte Deutschland in Germany. Each delivers about half of the programs broadcast.

Arte is funded through license fees and, in the case of France, additional state subsidies. Programs are simulcast in German and French and have the broadly defined goal of contributing to the integration of Europe. It has coproducing partnerships with public broadcasters from Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Austria, Poland, Italy, and Finland. The 1999 programming budget amounted to 182 million Euros or about $170 million, of which the largest proportion was allocated to theme nights (18%), followed by documentaries (13%), feature films (12%), and TV drama (12%). About 45 hours of original material are transmitted each week over air, cable, and satellite from 7:00 p.m. until after midnight. Early afternoon hours feature repeat programming in digital format.

Theme nights, documentaries, and features also take up the majority of the weekly program schedule—fully two-thirds, with 11 hours devoted to documentaries and six hours to feature films. The remaining time is spent on television drama, the arts, an urban magazine called *Metropolis*, and the news.

The cumulative audience throughout Europe watching Arte at least once a week is estimated at more than 35 million, with a market share of about 4% in France and 0.8% in Germany. In both countries, viewers rank Arte's program quality consistently above comparable television channels. This is noteworthy, since Arte competes with entrenched public television stations that appeal to upscale audience groups with similar programming. In addition, satellite transmission of Arte reaches audiences in North Africa and Eastern Europe.

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When producers work with Arte, there's often a degree of fund-raising that's part of the job. The total budget for a theme night is $250,000 at the most for a four-hour slot. In addition to the principal documentary, this budget must also cover the licensing a feature film in many cases, as well as other components, such as essays, studio discussions, etc. Additional funding frequently has to be secured through other sources. As Weiner explains, "Both France and Germany usually put up less than half of the budget for any single film, so the only way to make a program is to co-produce with another major broadcaster in one of the few territories left . . . The producer may retain the rights to a non-Arte territory [and] it is necessary to 'reserve' the territories for a first broadcast before signing the Arte contract," a complex endeavor, since broadcast territories do overlap. Nonetheless, Weiner has been able to sell to or find co-funding from stations as diverse as NCRV-Holland, Canal 22-Mexico, Channel 4-UK, NHK-Japan, SVT-Sweden, PBS, and HBO.

Producing Arte programs for WDR and ZDF

Arte Deutschland TV consists of two national public television networks: ARD, a decentralized consortium of the television systems based in each of the German states, and the nationally broadcast ZDF. Each network provides half of the German Arte program share, with ARD's contribution broken down roughly according to the size of the audience each state television system serves. (These include WDR, Cologne, 22%; SWR, Stuttgart, 17%; NDR, Hamburg, 16%; BR, Munich, 14.5%; MDR, Leipzig, 10.5%; HR, Frankfurt/Main 7%; SFB, Berlin 5.5%; ORB, Potsdam, 2.5%; and SR,



ARTE CONTACTS

Strasbourg Headquarters
Theme nights: Hans Robert Eisenhauer, hr-eisenhauer@Arte-tv.com
Documentaries: Jacques Laurent, j-laurent@Arte-tv.com
The Arts: Laurent Andres, l-andres@Arte-tv.com.

La Sept/Arte (France)
Theme nights: Alain Wieder, a-wieder@Arte-tv.com
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Drama/fiction: Pierre Chevalier, p-chevalier@Arte-tv.com

Arte Deutschland (Germany)
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ZDF (national station)
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As the largest European public broadcaster on the continent, WDR takes the lead in the ARD network. Its Arte budget



Producer Jane Weiner and (left) still from one of her Arte productions, *Cancel Visa (Zakkenrollers)*

is $5 million. There is no particular program genre WDR specializes in, but, given its sizable budget, it has more editorial flexibility than smaller German pubcasters, most of which have not yet worked with American independents. WDR Arte is headed by Dr. Sabine Rollberg, who says she welcomes co-productions with U.S. indies.

Nevertheless, interviews with producers reveal that WDR sometimes tries to impose production conditions which can be onerous, such as co-producing the program with a German company. According to Douglas Sloan, who produced Robert Longo's *A Winter Tale*, "Lengthy negotiations with the WDR were needed to get the required production flexibility."

As with La Sept, producers can pitch projects that sync up with WDR's theme nights. In late September 2000, the station was assembling theme nights around the topics "Waltz," "Couples," "Art Theft," "Double Life," "Child Abuse," "Medicine 2000," "Mama's Boy," and "Women in Russia." Among the WDR projects the station will be discussing at the Arte programming conference this month are: "Happy Birthday Woody Allen," "Who Is The Most Beautiful: Beauty Pageants," and "Presents: Christmas Specials." Among the new theme nights WDR will be suggesting are "Lions," "Wodka," "Fishing Fever," "Erotic Tales," and "Salt."

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EURODOLLARS

Some North American independent productions that received funding as a part of Arte theme nights:

Through ZDF

The Things That Remain, Mark Daniels, 2000
Tokyo Game, Veronique Legendre, 2000
Lost & Found, Jane Weiner, 2000
18B Justice, Felix Olivier, 2000
Conceiving Ada, Lynn Hershman, 1999
La Douleur [*The Pain*], Jane Weiner, 1998
All Power to the People, Lee Lew-Lee, 1997
The Final Insult, Charles Burnett, 1997
Chocolate, proposed by Jane Weiner, 1997
Breaking Up, Lisa Leeman, 1996
File B., Lynn Hershman, 1996
No Accident, Michel Negroponte, 1995
Unterwelten (*Underworlds*), Jane Weiner, 1995
The Celluloid Closet, Rob Epstein & Jeffrey Friedman, 1995
Sentimental Journey, Noel Burch, 1994
Recovered Diaries, Lynn Hershman, 1994
Silverlake Life, Tom Joslin & Peter Friedman, 1993
Comic Book Confidential, Ron Mann, 1992

Through Bavarian Broadcasting

The Last Cigarette, Kevin Rafferty, 1999

Through La Sept

Beyond Belief, Peter Friedman, 2002
Vu d'Ici (*Seen from Here*), Anne Georget, 2000
An American Love Story, Jennifer Fox, 1999
The Life and Time of Life and Time, Peter Friedman, 1998
There Are No Flights From New York to Marseilles, Peter Friedman, 1998
Searching for Lucie, Emma Circhton-Miller, Chris Rawlence, Oliver Sachs, 1996
Le Tunnel sous la Manche (*The Tunnel under the Channel*), Jane Weiner, 1994, which included *Le Trous* (*The Hole*), Richard Leacock & Valerie Lalonde
Signes de Singes (*Signs from Apes*), Linda Harrar, 1983

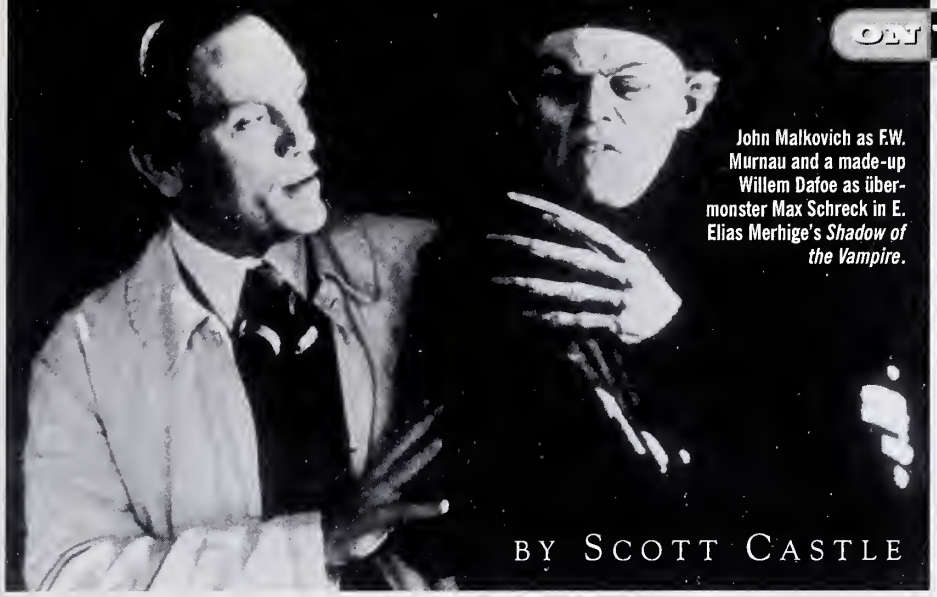
Productions outside theme nights

Ravi Shankar: Full Circle, Mark Kidel, 2001
W.I.S.O.R., Michel Negroponte, 2000
Home Page, Doug Block, 1999
Death by Design, Peter Friedman & J.F. Brunet, 1995

WDR HAS A RATHER LIMITED track record with U.S. independents, whereas ZDF has worked with them for many years. Eckart Stein's program *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel* (*The Little Television Feature*) funded numerous U.S. independents before shifting support to directors from developing countries. Since ZDF provides half of the German portion for Arte, its Arte budget has became an important European source of funding for U.S. indies, specifically through the vehicle of the theme nights. ZDF/Arte's principal objectives are to foster new filmmakers, avoid the lockstep of traditional approaches, and present everyday themes in an unusual and demanding fashion. Though the ZDF budget is limited, there is an incredible flexibility with respect to format, content, and formal execution. This approach reflects the preferences of a rather autonomous group of commissioning editors, and through it ZDF/Arte is trying to establish its own profile. As Markus Gieppner points out, "Once ZDF commits funding, it is smooth sailing, since it is a pleasure working with their commissioning editors."

For better or worse, American independents have an excellent reputation in Europe as a group. To tap this good-will, you'll need to know what European commissioning editors and executives want, hire well-known producers, cultivate crucial interpersonal skills, and develop some linguistic acumen. It also helps to be mobile and spend a portion of the year in Europe.

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John Malkovich as F.W. Murnau and a made-up Willem Dafoe as über-monster Max Schreck in E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire*.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

IN TODAY'S INDEPENDENT FILM MARKET THERE'S NO TIME FOR SLOW BUILDS. WITH THIS IN MIND "ON VIEW" OFFERS SHAMELESS PLUGS FOR CURRENT RELEASES AND NATIONAL BROADCASTS OF INDEPENDENT FILMS AND VIDEOS IN THE HOPE THAT YOU'LL SUPPORT THEM. WHO KNOWS—MAYBE THEY'LL DO THE SAME FOR YOU SOMEDAY.

THEATRICAL

Shadow of the Vampire (Lions Gate Films, Dec. 29, NY & LA) Indie stalwarts John Malkovich and Willem Dafoe play silent film director F. W. Murnau and actor Max Schreck, respectively, in E. Elias Merhige's latest film. The legendary Murnau was infamous for his meticulous attention to detail, but he may have gone to far with his latest casting coup. He recruits the mysterious actor Schrek for the lead in what will become the 1922 classic vampire film *Nosferatu*. A method actor to the extreme, Schreck sinks his teeth into the role with utter confidence and, when crew members begin disappearing, Murnau faces some hard choices about his leading man's contract.

Spring Forward (IFC Films, Dec. 1) Tom Gilroy's film was shot chronologically over the course of a year and unfolds in seven real-time scenes against the backdrop of the changing seasons. It follows the evolution of an unlikely friendship between Liev Schreiber, who plays Paul, a young ex-con recently released for robbing a Dunkin' Donuts, and Ned Beatty as his work partner Murph, a veteran municipal employee facing retirement. The two men's relationship unfold as they work together at a Parks and Recreation job in a small New England town. The film explores the way men interact and grow closer to their co-workers and the profound way each changes the other's perspective on life.

Songcatcher (Trimark, Dec.) Director Maggie Greenwald's newest film follows musicologist Lily Penleric (Janet McTeer) down to Appalachia in 1907. After being unfairly passed over for academic promotion, the song catcher heads to the hills and joins her sister's struggling school. After discovering that the locals have preserved the folk songs of Scotland and Ireland by passing them down over generations, she sets outs to write down their songs for posterity. But the locals are suspicious of newcomers, and their mistrust is amplified by labor problems with the coal companies. As Penleric becomes increasingly involved in the lives of the locals, she falls for the sublime blue eyes and fancy pickin' of local musician Aidan Quinn.

State & Main (Fine Line, Dec. 22, NY & LA) The stars have come out for David Mamet's latest film, which he both wrote and directed, about the adverse effects of a cell phone-wielding movie crew on a quaint New England town. Charles Durning, Alec Baldwin, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, David Paymer, Julia Stiles, Sarah Jessica Parker William H. Macy, and (surprise) Rebecca Pidgeon share the marquee in this "part Hollywood satire, part screwball comedy," which has Mamet exploring exactly how much a small town is willing to sacrifice for the glitz and glamour that only a movie set can provide. Hoffman is the film's writer, whose morals and motivations are challenged after spying the leading man's indiscretions with a local teen.

Traffic (USA Films, Dec. 22, NY & LA) Another stellar ensemble cast enlivens this thriller set in the world of drug trafficking, and compiled from four separate but intersecting storylines. Michael Douglas plays a State Supreme Court Justice who must fight the drug war as the new czar while dealing with his own daughter's growing addiction. With Benicio Del Toro as a Mexican policeman, Don Cheadle and Luis Guzman as DEA agents, Catherine Zeta-Jones as a drug baron's pregnant wife, and Steven Soderberg directing *Traffic*.

TELEVISION

The Eyes of Tammy Faye (Cinemax, Nov. 28 & Dec. 18, 24, 29) Before seeing this movie, my strongest memory of Tammy Faye wasn't Tammy at all, but Jan Hooks' unforgettable portrayal of her in a *Saturday Night Live* Church Chat sketch. This memory merely illustrates the central place the First Lady of the PTL holds in the American psyche, as a mascara-abusing butt of jokes. Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato's playful and inventive doc combines hand puppets, a voice-over by RuPaul, current interviews, and 20 years of stock footage to paint a more complex portrait of a resilient woman with a big heart, a proudly admitted affinity for her "trademark" eye make-up, and horrible taste in men. Keep your eyes open for a brief cameo by a young Kevin Spacey as Jim Bakker in the biopic TV movie.



Ned Beatty (l) and Liev Schreiber go tailgating in *Spring Forward*.

The Forgotten Americans, (PBS, Dec. 14, 10 p.m.; check local listings). Unbeknownst to most Americans, the American side of the U.S.-Mexico border harbors thousands of people living in makeshift settlements called "colonias." There are an estimated 1,500 colonias along the border, each them housing numerous residents who lack even the most basic amenities like water and electricity. This documentary, produced by Hector Galan in association with Southwest Texas State University, traces the lives of colonias' residents over the course of a year to create a compelling portrait of the people living there in limbo while pursuing the American Dream.

PHOTO: JEAN-PAUL KIEFFER, COURTESY LIONS GATE

WHY MAKE ACTIVIST FILMS?

A Roundtable Discussion at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival

BY BERNARDO RUIZ

ON JULY 13, SIX DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS HAD THE TABLES turned on them as they answered questions instead of asking them. The filmmakers, all participants in the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, discussed the notion of activist filmmaking, as well as the nuts and bolts of getting their films made. In a roundtable conversation with filmmaker Bernardo Ruiz, they explored the topics facing social documentary makers and why the struggle goes on. Participating were:

Marion Lipschutz & Rose Rosenblatt, *Live Free or Die*
A film that follows Dr. Wayne Goldner, who performs legal abortions in a small New Hampshire town. While most of the town supports abortion rights, few want to confront the right-to-lifers and the controversy they bring. Goldner stands virtually alone in a opposing a powerful minority.

David Belle, *Abandoned*
Thousands of U.S. residents face deportation, caught in the wake of the harsh new immigration laws passed by Congress in 1996. The film takes a close look behind the official facade of the immigration detention system to reveal a multimillion-dollar prison industry and how it benefits by specializing in such cases, which are billed at almost twice the price of housing regular inmates.

Laleh Khadivi, *900 Women*
The Louisiana Correctional Institute houses the state's most dangerous female prisoners and often exceeds its population capacity of 900. Three-quarters of the inmates are mothers, and one fourth are serving sentences of 15 years or more. This film is a striking, sensitive portrait of life in this deceptively peaceful atmosphere.

Beverly Peterson, *Invisible Revolution*
Taking us to the front lines of a powerful, passionate, and very raw youth subculture, this film documents not only the young people involved in the pro-white movement, but also the counter-movement that demonstrates against and often clashes with them: Anti-Racist Action (ARA)

Bernardo Ruiz: Let's start off by discussing the idea of 'activist filmmaking,' what it means and how it is still relevant today. Would you define yourselves as activist filmmakers?

Rose Rosenblatt: It is a wide parameter, but I guess so, because I take on controversial subjects, difficult subjects. I insist on doing them in depth, and I insist on some sort of point of view.

Laleh Khadivi: I would say yes, too, because the whole time I was making this film, I wanted to be a social worker. I didn't want to leave [my subjects] and come back to New York and just sit in front of an Avid. I didn't want to distance myself from these actual human dramas. This is my first film, and I got into it because I knew it would have an effect when it was done. I don't think I could work on another film [that didn't address important issues], no matter how much money you gave me.

David Belle: I don't make too much of a separation between activism and the kind of filmmaking I do. I think there are many tiers to activism—filmmaking is just one arm of the process. I've never looked at it like, a film's going to change the world. I always looked at it like, here's this issue and here is the mainstream press's presentation—which is very unbalanced. Typically, there's a whole side that has no voice, and it's usually the poor. My idea is why don't we try to offset that and give some balance to those who don't have a say?

Beverly, in your case, the stories that deal with white racists and even the Anti Racist Action (ARA) group are rarely touched on with any kind of depth in the mainstream media. Was that part of your reason for wanting to cover that world?

Beverly Peterson: Well, it's funny, because [the project] started totally by accident. I happened to be on a fellowship in Ohio. This woman who lived next door told me about these kids in ARA [a loose coalition of punks, skinheads, and anarchist youth who fight fascist and racist groups like neo-nazi skinheads and the Ku Klux Klan]. It surprised me, and I had to go and check this out. But what made me want to make the movie—I mean, I could have done this as an article—was because I got pissed off. I was so angry with mainstream media's [coverage]. Everybody I talked to hated these kids. Even my friends who are progressive hated these kids. [*laughs*] It drove me nuts, so I became determined to show them as they are.

In the process, one of the things I had to fight was the concept of being an activist. If I [were just an activist], then the film would just be dismissed. So, I tried to make it as objective as possible by being as subjective as possible with every single group. It's funny, because I sent the film to the government of this town [which appears in the film] which is going to have a community rally [against racism] in Ohio. I didn't know what to expect. They said, "This was a great film. It was really objective. It was really fair. But we hate those ARA kids." But what I told the woman was, I didn't make the movie to make you love the ARA. I made it so that at least you would hear their voice.

That brings up an interesting point. One of the things your film did well was to humanize a complex subject. There's a moment in *Invisible Revolution* when we are watching the preparations for a wedding. The bride is fussing with the details. It turns out the 18-year-old imperial wizard is getting married to his white power girlfriend. She is crying. You capture this almost tender moment between them—loving glances. It is a sweet and typical scene and a very disarming moment because it humanizes these white racists. They are a "normal" couple until the shotguns go off and everyone starts yelling, "White Power!"

Interestingly, everyone here did that with their films on one level or another. You all dealt with abstract issues like Abortion, Racism, Immigration, Women in Prison. But what makes these films work is that they are told through people, by humanizing these social issues. How do you look for the stories within an issue? How do you get connected to those stories and those people?

Khadivi: The best thing about being able to document life is getting both sides. Working in the prison, a lot of filmmakers have the tendency to consider only what the inmates are thinking: What do they do? Are they being violated? In the case of *900 Women*, the prison is [seemingly] serene. All the guards are women. That fascinated me. I wanted to know how it was possible that these women who are guards come from the same communities as the inmates. All the correctional officers are coming from lower-income African American rural communities that are surrounding the prison Those are the same places that the inmates come from. They knew each other when they went to school. They knew each other as little kids. They just took different paths. And that interaction between them was really fascinating.

You tend to come to a story with a good guy/bad guy perspective. When you start to dismantle that, I think people broaden their ideas about who fills what role. In the film you find there is a guard who has a heart. She has something to tie her to the people she is supposed to be oppressing. But that isn't always the case.





The roundtable panelists: (from left) Beverly Peterson, Rose Rosenblatt, Marion Lipschutz, Laleh Khadivi, and David Belle.

From Rose Rosenblatt and Marion Lipschutz's *Live Free or Die* (left).

From David Belle and Nicholas Wrathall's *Abandoned: The Betrayal of American Immigrants* (above).

Rosenblatt: There is this tightrope you have to walk. You have to have a point of view, and at the same time you have to be omniscient. If you don't get both sides in some way, then it does becomes cardboard, it becomes black and white. You discredit yourself and the film. That happens very quickly. It's so important that you have access to both sides. Without access, don't go there. Go there when you have it. Interestingly [in *Live Free or Die*] we got access to one of the characters and desperately wanted to get access to the right-to-lifer, who gave us no access. That notion of no-access became the character. That was what was riveting. But it would have obviously been better if we could

have gotten into her house, talked to her, and found out she had nine kids and is a rabid anti-abortion pro-lifer.

This is the woman who, in the documentary, suggests that since you and the subject are both Jewish that you are somehow in cahoots.

Rosenblatt: Right, because Dr. Goldner is also Jewish.

Marion Lipschutz: I do think, though, when you walk into a situation, my impulse is to look at all sides and to be fair and give people their due. Often that makes for a better film—to at least have some of that access. I also think that with this film we set out to make it with a point of view. It was that doctors are being scared away from the profession [of abortion]. They're not doing it. We came in with that point of view. We didn't come in with the point of view of 'let's find out what it it's like to be a doctor.' So that meant that we were indeed making selections that were probably unfair to the people who are driving doctors out of the business. So, I think there are different kinds of ways do activist films. The difficulty is really being careful about doing propaganda.

Rosenblatt: You can't make a good piece without a point of view. I think this is something a lot of filmmakers—at least a lot of young filmmakers—struggle with. They should not be afraid of it because they're not going to get on PBS or something.

Khadivi: At one of my screenings at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, somebody raised their hand—of course, I was petrified. I guess everybody comes to a prison film, in this community of activist/documentary filmmakers, and expects to see a very pro-inmate, pro-reform film. Mine didn't really have that point of view. Mine is sort of a pro-person, pro-women film. This guy raised his hand and said, "Do you realize you've made a promotional piece for prisons?" Because, one of the lifers, one of the women who is going to die there, said, "I think my life is better now than if I were in the free world." She says, "I have found things in myself that I would not have found otherwise. I would probably be dead now." The guy mentioned this comment. I said, "That is a revolution that came within herself. That had nothing to do with the institution. Whatever these women achieved, they did it by themselves." And just because I showed the Warden's side and the correctional officer's side as well as the inmates side, this person took offense. You do walk that fine line. Some people come expecting to see one thing, and the minute you show them something else . . . .

Rosenblatt: I think it's a sophisticated notion [to get both sides]. People who work in activism [don't always understand] that there's an artistic component to making a film. We're trying to pull back and tell a story and get people to rethink things.

Belle: It's essential to humanize the characters and not to preach about an issue. That's the way you are going to pull people in. In doing that, of course, you have your point of view, but showing both sides for me is . . . I love it. I love to talk to the other side. It adds a whole extra dimension to your film. You are eventually going to find someone who is proud of what they do and who is willing to talk confidently about that.

David, that was one of the elements that worked really well in *Abandoned*. The people representing the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) side often seemed like they were trying to convince themselves of this flawed policy. By allowing them to talk and talk, you allowed them to stumble through their rhetoric and search for ways to justify this unreasonable law [the 1996 Immigration Law]. Your film also brings up another interesting point. You used narration to frame the issue. In fact, you all used narration. What motivated the narration in each of your films?

Rosenblatt: Lack of imagination. [*Everyone laughs*]

Belle: I really wanted *Abandoned* to have no narration, but then I had a 5-1/2 hour rough cut and I thought, I have to put it in there. Especially with something like this. It's too technical [on its own]. It's too legalistic. You have to reduce things so that the story can move on without getting bogged down in details.

Lipschuptz: Narration isn't bad, it's just bad narration that's bad.

Rosenblatt: Narration does something. It serves a function besides helping to structure. But it also takes you outside of the piece. And it's very, very frustrating because you [generally] don't want to do that. So you have this dual thing that you have to struggle with. That's the hardest thing, having the audiences follow the subject. Because you know the subject very, very well. Oftentimes things are unclear, and I screen it for an audience and realize what will do it is a line or two of narration. I don't want to do that, but I just have to. Then there's this personal narration which we went with, which is a very different thing. It works, in terms of character. [*Ed.:* In this film, the filmmakers/narrators themselves become a character.]

Right, that was one of the things that really worked about your film. The kind of asides or personal information that we as an audience became privy to was only possible through your personal narration. It gave it structure as well as provided insight.
Now what about funding? What were some of the sources you targeted?

Khadivi: For *900 Women*, A&E gave us money to go down and make a 42-minute piece. It turned out to be longer than 42 minutes, so when their money ran out, I went to Soros [the Soros Documentary Fund of the Open Society Institute] and they helped out. The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities—after I spent a really long time convincing them that this piece wasn't going to slaughter Louisiana and make it look like a crime-filled, corrupt state—they gave me money. A lot of money. The Playboy Foundation also gave money and a variety of other groups, but television was really the biggest chunk of money. We also sold rights in Europe.

How much were you able to raise in total?

Khadivi: Probably $230,000. TV is really the way. Schedulers and programmers have so much time to fill.

Rosenblatt: But are you happy with the TV cut? [from 74 minutes to 42 minutes]

Khadivi: Yeah, in terms of knowing that this can be shown to America and the message is intact. It still has the same ending as in the 74-minute version. It ends with the line, "Women are the fastest growing prison population." But, yeah, we struggled with cutting it down.

Lipschutz: I had a round of foundation funding. And I think I've

figured out something that is really useful to understand. When foundations say they don't fund media, it means they have people who are incredibly educated about an issue, which you don't know as well as they know. What they want to know is that you really understand the issue that they have been spending their life studying. They are only going to fund you if you promise to bring to the public an understanding of what those issues are. They have a limited pile of money, and lots and lots of people want it.

Peterson: Most foundations were horrified with *Invisible Revolution*.

So where did the funding come from?

Peterson: Well, every station turned me down. They all said, "We're doing it ourselves." I said, "Really?" [*laughs*] They were trotting out the same subjects that everyone else was trotting out. I couldn't get any big foundation money either. So I went to small family foundations that had small discretionary funds of $3,000 to $4,000 in the towns where these groups were. I would call them up and say, "You've got this rally coming up. I'm going to be there in two weeks. I'm desperate. I need money right away. I can come down. I can film it. Here's my budget. I've got to have enough for this one shoot and this one shoot only. Please, please, please." And that was how I got my funding.





Two female convicts from Laleh Khadivi's *900 Women*.



From Beverly Peterson's *Invisible Revolution*.

Lipschutz: You poor thing!

Khadivi: Wow.

So, really it was funded moment by moment...

Peterson: And thank god my cameraman—who was fully paid at scale—was understanding. I also got money towards the end when I sold footage of an interview I did with Ben Smith, who two weeks after the interview went off on a shooting rampage in Texas and killed two people and wounded nine before shooting himself. He made history.

So you had this "exclusive" footage.

Peterson: Right, because no one wanted to interview him. People were like "Why are you interviewing him? Interview someone else." I sold it to ABC and got $30,000-$40,000. My husband was saying, "Just think, we could pay all our bills, we could be out of debt." I said, "Honey, the ARA are going to be in Las Vegas, I can take a trip and . . ." [*Everyone laughs*] I was able to keep working. I sold the footage to HBO and I'm selling some to *Dateline*. I was able to get a lot of press out of it, too.

How about you, David?

Belle: We have some private money each year. Crowing Rooster Arts is a nonprofit. Our money comes from people who wish to remain anonymous, but who are very concerned about human rights.

How important is it to organize around the distribution and exhibition of your film?

Belle: It's just as important—if not more so—than making the film. So many films are made that don't get seen. You can' t throw everything up in the air and say, 'thank god, I'm finished.' You have to organize. I would really like this film to get on TV, but I am also going to be distributing tapes to [grassroots] groups, organizing on a very simple level.

Rosenblatt: I'm pretty despairing on the subject. And we're doing pretty well. We're airing on nationally on *P.O.V.*, but you don't have that sense that it's going to make a big difference. You want it to. You calculate that it will. We decided to air this right before the elections [aired September 26] because we thought wouldn't it be great if we got pulled into the dialogue around the election. But I don't know what it would take for that to happen—to get Hillary [or] Al Gore to see this and somehow use this.

Khadivi: I want to get a truck and a screen and drive around the south and project the film at women's prisons. It is a rolling circus, but that's why I made this film, to get it out there. We did this on *The Farm*, and now I want to do it on a smaller level.

Peterson: There's a group called Working Films, they're just getting started. They're helping me exhibit/promote my film. Doing it alone is just exhausting. There comes a time as a filmmaker when you just want to get on to the next thing.

So as full of despair as the process can be, you all want to continue making films. [*Everyone nods, laughing.*]

Rosenblatt: Because making a film is delicious, it is the greatest time, it's wonderful. It gets in your blood and you just can't stop.

Bernardo Ruiz is a journalist and filmmaker. He is currently producing/directing a short, Night Magic.

JAY ROSENBLATT'S EXCAVATIONS OF THE PSYCHE

BY MICHAEL FOX

IT COMES AS A BIT OF A SURPRISE WHEN SAN FRANCISCO FILMMAKER Jay Rosenblatt cites Chris Marker's peripatetic essay/documentary *Sans Soleil* as a pivotal influence. After all, Rosenblatt's scintillating reputation—he's arguably the most honored maker of shorts working in America today—derives primarily from his painstakingly crafted and tightly controlled collage films. Blending optically printed archival footage, newsreels, and home movies with evocative soundtracks, Rosenblatt's films unmask and explode the childhood "wisdom" received from parents, pals, and preachers.

A week-long mini-retrospective in August at Manhattan's Film Forum showcased Rosenblatt's unique form of experimental documentary for unexpectedly large audiences. *Short of Breath* (1990) conveys a child's unease over unexplained parental depression while *The Smell of Burning Ants* (1994) explores the peer pressure that bonds adolescent males into picking on weaker boys. Rosenblatt's breakthrough hit, *Human Remains* (1998), reveals the banal, human sides of Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Mao, and Franco. His latest work, *King of the Jews* (2000), exposes the lies that have fueled centuries of Christian anti-Semitism.

Rosenblatt's lesser-known collaborations with Jennifer Frame employ a more varied stylistic palette. The poetic *Brain in the Desert* (1990) evokes the choked demise of a relationship, while *Period Piece* (1996) is a wry documentary take on girls' misconceptions about menstruation. The video diary *A Pregnant Moment* (1999), about a dog and her puppies is the true wild card in the artist's oeuvre. A Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, Rosenblatt has earned prizes at festivals from Sundance to Melbourne, the Hamptons to Hamburg. I sat down with Rosenblatt in his spacious Castro District flat for an in-depth interview after his Film Forum run.



PHOTO COURTESY FILMMAKER

What comes first, the words or the music? Do you start with an image or a concept?

Sometimes an image triggers a memory or a feeling, sometimes it's an idea, sometimes I start writing and then think of the best visual treatment. There have been films where I just started shooting with some vague sense or mood that I wanted to explore. I was working on *King of the Jews* and I came across this image of Hitler eating. It was so disturbing to me that it triggered the idea for a film about dictators being human (*Human Remains*). With *The Smell of Burning Ants*, I came across an image of a boy pushing another boy and then a third boy sticking his fist in, and that triggered a childhood memory of fifth grade. On the other hand, with *King of the Jews* I wanted to make a film about my fear of Jesus as a child and how that had transformed.

Some filmmakers move from documentary to fiction ostensibly to gain more control. Why did you go in the opposite direction? After starting out with actors, you gravitated to found and archival footage.

The move was one of having more control and trying to focus on the aspect of filmmaking that I truly enjoyed, which was editing. I found when I was working with actors in the early couple of films, without a budget, it was extremely stressful. So I

made a commitment not to work that way unless I had money to pay people. Also, the ideas did dictate the form. If an idea was triggered by an image, it seemed like using those images from my childhood was more authentic than to have this artifice of actors acting like they were kids in the '50s or '60s. At the same time, if you want to make it cohesive and you're using different sources, you have to figure out a way of integrating them. That's part of the creative challenge. Ultimately I feel that working with found footage and archival imagery taps into people's collective bank of memories and images in a more powerful way than recreating it.

Aren't you evoking their experience of childhood rather than communicating your experience?

I think I'm doing both. The voiceover is communicating my experience; the images are trying to make it more universal. I think the images, because they're not necessarily my images of my childhood or something I've re-created, allow people to see themselves and project more into it.

If your work invites viewers to plug into their own memories, do they miss a lot in a first viewing?

There's enough space in the films for people to go into their own experience and then come back to the film. I think I build enough of that into the actual structure of the film.

"I don't have answers, but hopefully my films can be catalysts for a deep discussion and a way of reflecting."

How?

By not having a constant barrage of words, for instance. Even *Human Remains*, which has a lot of words, still has moments where it pauses. I think the films that do beg for a person to go into their own memories have lots of space where there's sound effects or music, which allows the viewer to decide when to come back. I like when a film brings me into it in a way that involves me in terms of my own personal experience or memories. So I hope that happens with my films.

Are there techniques you've picked up from other films for doing that?

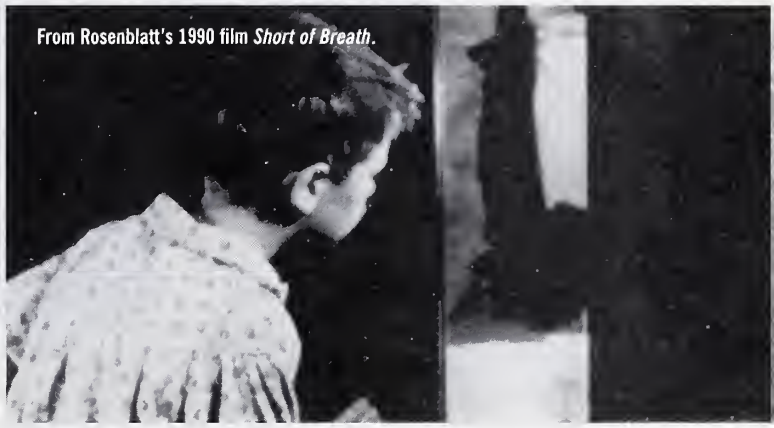
Not explaining everything, for one thing. Films that do all the work for you are films where you don't enter into them. You just consume them. A film that doesn't explain everything invites you in through the intellect, through thought, through emotion, through music or more of a trance-induced state. Those films aren't speaking down to you.

So how do you avoid being overly obscure or abstract or oblique?

One way is getting feedback all along from people you trust, so that you're not lost in something. Especially with my projects, which take years to finish, I can get so absorbed and lose all perspective. I have to step back and that involves asking for help, or taking a break and coming back to it.

You worked with Jennifer Frame for a long time, as well as Caveh Zahedi and John Turk. How do you work with others on films that are as personal as yours?

Collaboration is really difficult for me, I must say. It's very fulfilling when it works, and so frustrating when it's not working. If I had to put it in a very blunt way, it's very difficult to compromise on artistic vision. It's hard to say, "Okay, I'll give that up, if you give this up," because you don't want to compromise too much. On the other hand, if you can let go of some of that control and trust the other person, you can elevate the work. It's exciting and it's frustrating. If someone's helping me on my film,



From Rosenblatt's 1990 film *Short of Breath*.

it's very important to explain to me why they think their ideas work better. I'm open to that, but I also know what I like a lot of the times.

Isn't the guideline in collaboration to remember that it's not about you and your vision, but what's best for the work?

Of course I think that my vision is what's best for the work. [*laughs*] It's so hard to give up what you are attached to. Sometimes the collaborative relationship helps you do that. You could be attached to something for the wrong reason, and somebody can point that out. What's also great is since filmmaking for me can be a very tedious, grueling process, working with someone can elevate it to enjoyment.

How do you work with Caveh?

Either I respond to his suggestion immediately and say "That's a great idea," or if I'm not sure, he explains it to me very thoroughly. It's not something that we just do and then send off to a festival the next day. It's something we sit with for months, sometimes, and see if it holds up to the test of time.

With *King of the Jews* specifically, I was very stuck in what I call the documentary section. I had a sense of what information was important, but the ways I had thought about conveying it weren't working. I had tried just text on the screen, separate text cards. I had tried moving text running on the bottom. I had tried large text double-exposed on the image. Caveh said, "Why don't you try fragmenting the statements into short fragments with separate images? An image per fragment." And he showed me some photos he had taken or cut out from magazines with little fragments, and I liked the poetic effect it had. I'm very thankful to him, because I'd edited the film for about a year and then I called him in to do the co-editing. The first and third sections were a little more formed, but the second section was completely collaborative in that respect.



All hail the *King of the Jews*

"The fact that Jesus was a Jew is the ultimate irony: How can you revere the man and despise his people?"

That section, which connects ancient anti-Semitism to the Holocaust, is as powerful as anything in your work. It works on your mind even while it punches you in the gut.

What we're playing with is prose and poetry, if you will. The poetry was the fragments, the individual segments, and the prose was the flow of what was being said—the full sentence. A very difficult decision was how long to leave each fragment up there. How do you keep the flow so people don't completely forget what was just said, because sometimes there's three or four fragments, but also create the separation of images and fragments of text and have that work on a different level. That was very difficult, and I don't know if it always works. That's one of those cases where it might be good to see the film a second time, so once you know what's being said, you can focus on the more poetic part of it.

You mentioned sound earlier. What's your approach?

I consider the sound as important as the images. They work in tandem. Especially with the collage work, sound is sometimes the glue you're using to take two images that you might have difficulty cutting together. I also use sound in a contrapuntal way, to say something different than the image. Sometimes the humor might be in a sound effect. In *Human Remains* there's a shot of Stalin kissing a man and then kissing another man, and I used the sound effect of a kiss. If you just see it [without the soundtrack] it's Russian guys kissing each other, but when you hear the kiss it brings a strange, creepy humor to it. It's a whole different thing after you add that.

Did you do a Walter Murch, searching for the perfect smooch?

I don't have that kind of library. [*laughs*] I think there were a couple of kisses on a sound effects CD. And one of the first worked perfectly, synched right up and it seemed like it could have been there. But you knew it wasn't.

What's the difference between using prerecorded music and working with a composer like Erik Ian Walker, who scored *The Smell of Burning Ants*?

Music is really important in my films. It adds to the lyrical quality, definitely helps the flow, underscores a mood or emotion. Erik and I worked back and forth for three years on *Ants*, and we would talk about what was important in a certain section and what the theme of that section was. There's something great about working with a composer. Rather than fitting the rhythm and flow and timing of the images to a prerecorded piece of music, you have a little more freedom. So when there were certain movements or gestures, he could either accentuate or pull out sound at certain moments. That kind of control is really nice. With other films where I've used a piece of classical music, I've had to make the film work to that music, or sometimes cut a little piece of the music out. It's more confining.

***Human Remains* was criticized by some individuals for having the chutzpah to mix laughter and mass murderers.**

What's the role of humor in your work?

My very first film that I showed to an audience outside of a classroom was called *Doubt*. At a 1980 screening in Eugene, Oregon, somebody in the audience screamed halfway through, "I confess!" [*laughs*] I thought, "There's something to that," and the next film I consciously was thinking in terms of humor. Ever since, if there's an opportunity where it doesn't detract but opens up a viewer and engages them, I will go for that. Once people are laughing, you can get more serious things across. They're not as guarded; you've given them something, in the form of a laugh. I'm not into cheap jokes or a gratuitous laugh; I use it in the service of the film. And in terms of a feedback mechanism, it's one of the only ways you know how an audience is engaged with your film. With a large audience especially, you can really get a sense if people are with you.

Some of the humor in my films is very subtle. It might be a slight freezing of a frame in a certain way that I found a little funny. And if you get a generous, very perceptive audience, they will catch all of that. Sometimes they'll catch things that I didn't intend, which either comes from nervous laughter or they're just off. There are a few things that I still find funny in some of my films that have yet to get a laugh, and I'm waiting for that audience that catches them.

How do you reply to people who were offended by *Human Remains*, asserting that some things are sacred and not to be touched by humor?

It's satire, making fun of the dictators in a way that they should be made fun of. Humor is a way of cutting them down from the pedestals they've been put on, cutting them down to size. There's no sympathy for these people. They are presented as disgusting individuals, but they are presented as human, and that's difficult for some people. It's more comfortable to look at them as monsters and never go beyond the surface, never look at yourself and your own responsibility for the horrors that take place in the world. Until we take responsibility and accept that part of ourselves, that's the only way we are going to raise our individual and collective consciousness so that we don't give

power to people like that. When I was a little kid, I asked my grandfather what happened to his relatives. He would say, "Hitler killed them." "What do you mean 'Hitler killed them?' " It could never [have been] just one person. It's the power that that one person gets vested from the collective.

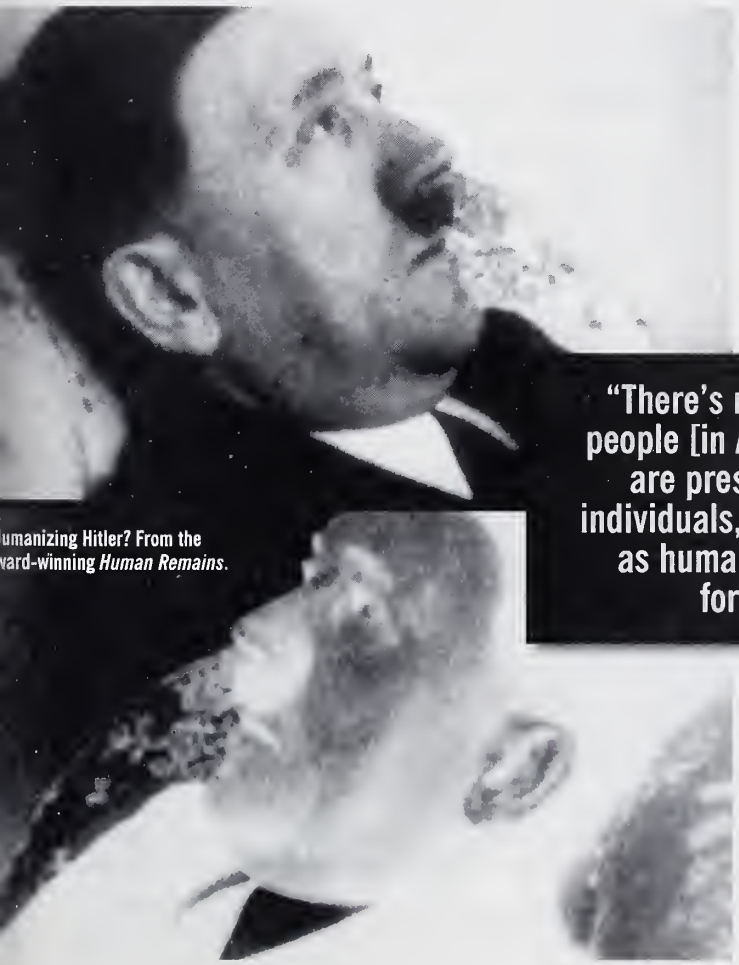
Both *Human Remains* and *King of the Jews* stemmed from childhood interpretations of Hitler and Jesus, respectively, and an actual incident from your adolescence is at the center of *The Smell of Burning Ants*. Is your work getting more personal?

From the start, my films have been really personal. Some of the earlier, more narrative-oriented films were based on my own experience. I think that maybe with more people seeing [the recent work] I feel a little bit more exposed. But if more people saw the earlier work, I would have felt the same way.

The first segment of *King of the Jews* is a personal narrative consisting of home movies and educational films evoking your childhood in the late '50s and early '60s.

Yes, that section is called "Jesus and Me" and it's about what happens when you find something out at a young age that turns your whole world upside down. For me, the revelation that Jesus was a Jew blew my seven-year-old mind. But it's really a point of departure to get to other issues.

Where did you get the historical information contained in the middle section of *King of the Jews*?



umanizing Hitler? From the ward-winning *Human Remains*.

"There's no sympathy for these people [in *Human Remains*]. They are presented as disgusting individuals, but they are presented as human, and that's difficult for some people."

Like many documentaries, much of the research is not explicitly in the film, but informs the way it is structured and what people get out of it. A lot of the new research I looked at focuses on the historical Jesus, as there's a group of religious scholars trying to figure out what is accurate and inaccurate in the Gospels. The more traditional Christians who have taken issue with the film are responding to the notion that there could be anything fabricated in the Gospels. I have a sense that these people are literalists; they believe every word in the Gospels is true. I suggest in this section that the Gospel writers had two agendas in laying the blame for Jesus' death on the Jews. One was to curry favor with the Romans, because they themselves were being persecuted by the Romans, and the other was to attract new converts to Christianity.

Anything else in the middle section, which you call "One of Us," that upset viewers?

Well, the other focus is re-appropriating Jesus as a Jew. I think many people see him as a Christian. Christianity has de-Judaized Jesus. Although the New Testament doesn't deny his Jewish background, a strange sleight-of-hand takes place. When you blame "the Jews" for the death of Jesus, you're implying that Jesus himself was not a Jew.

Which brings us to the third section, a wordless visual enactment of Jesus' crucifixion as depicted in a variety of old movies.

There are some ruptures in the Passion narrative—montage images of redwood trees being sawed, Warsaw Ghetto corpses, WWII bombers, people grieving the Kennedy assassination—that evoke other time periods. There is a rationale behind the trajectory of the film. I start with the personal and move towards the universal. We go from my voiceover, to text, to just images and music. We go from personal specificity to an image of light in the cosmos—you can't get more universal than that.

When there's been any Jewish criticism, it comes from the third section. That section, which I call "The Light Is All Around Us," is a further reclaiming of Jesus as a Jew, and it's filled with metaphors for crucifixion and resurrection. Many Jews feel uncomfortable because of their associations with crucifixion and the resurrection—namely, being blamed and the implication of that blame, which is Christian anti-Semitism for the last 2,000 years. It's hard to imagine the Holocaust happening without Christian anti-Semitism and the myth that the Jews killed Christ, because that myth is so embedded. Yet the whole notion of Christian anti-Semitism is ludicrous, because so much of Christianity has its basis in Judaism. The fact that Jesus was a Jew is the ultimate irony: How can you revere the man and despise his people?

What has been the response to *King of the Jews*?

At Sundance, one man said, "You got your facts wrong." I said, "What do you mean by that?" "I found your film to be anti-





From top: Looking for Mr. Clean in *Restricted*. Les enfants terribles: from *The Smell of Burning Ants*.

Christian." And I said, "I thought it was very positive and pro-Jesus." He said, "That's not what I said." And I realized that's not what he said, and I was actually glad for that distinction, because that's one of the points of my film. Then somebody else got up—it should be pointed out that Sundance is in Utah, where there are a lot of Mormons—and he wanted to get a copy of the film, because he said that his people are reaching out to the people of Israel. I told him how he could get a videotape, but I never heard from him again.

After the [San Francisco] Jewish Film Festival screening, I got an elaborate email from this woman who felt that I was doing missionary work and what she called "witnessing," which was trying to convert people to Christianity. So on the one hand I was getting "You're anti-Christian" and in another context I was being pro-Christian and actually missionary.

What do you think that means?

I think the film is hitting a chord for some people. There are certain wounds that the film deals with that are still unhealed. It's always cathartic to take something that's disturbing and turn it into something other people could benefit from. I really hope it could be a healing film.

Not only *King of the Jews* but several of my films have an open-endedness. We were talking about audiences bringing their own experience but they also bring their own projections of what your intent is. But controversy is a healthy thing and it can also bring dialog, so I emailed this person back and we had a bit of a correspondence. Both of our eyes were opened more. I don't agree at all with what she was saying, but it was good for me to hear that somebody could view it that way. Now I articulate my response a little more precisely. You know, you're not conscious of everything you do [in a film], so even though I don't think she's right in her analysis, it's still good to question and reflect on what you did.

Was *King of the Jews* your contribution to the millennium?

[*laughs*] I started the film in 1995, but then I made *Human Remains*, which was supposed to be a quick five-minute film and turned into almost three years. Then I went back to *King of the Jews* and, as the millennium was approaching, it seemed so fitting to finish it in the year 2000. Even calling it the year 2000 acknowledges Jesus, of course. [*laughs*] So I had a little bit of a deadline there.

You described *King of the Jews* as a healing film. How does your training as a mental health counselor inform your work?

My films that I'm particularly passionate about have a healing aspect to them, or a healing motivation. I have a motivation to raise consciousness by confronting people in areas that are not always easy to confront, or popular, and to provoke. When I was at a festival in Switzerland, I described *The Smell of Burning Ants* to a woman and she said, "Oh, you mean you open up wounds to let the poisons out." I thought that was a really nice metaphor. I don't have answers and I don't think the films have answers, but they hopefully can be catalysts for a deep discussion and a way of reflecting with one's self as you're viewing it.

Do you consider your work to be psychological?

Analytical is a more appropriate description than psychological, because my work incorporates emotions and feelings just as much as intellect and the cerebral. It incorporates the psyche and consciousness, but I don't think it's cold or distant. A lot of the work, though not all, stems from personal experience, which keeps the heart in.

Do you identify yourself a West Coast or a San Francisco filmmaker?

I love San Francisco and I love the fact that there is a film community here. But I don't identify myself a West Coast filmmaker. During the Film Forum show, one writer chose to focus on the West Coast-California aspect of my work. He was flippant and I thought a little mean-spirited about the whole thing. He wasn't looking at the work, but rather that I'd lived in San Francisco for almost 20 years. The basis of his critique was that it's West Coast liberal humanism.

Would you prefer he referred to your work as experimental documentary?

I don't like the labels of "experimental" or "documentary" because I think so many films are hybrids now. Let's say "not easily categorized or marketed films." By the way, for those to find their place in terms of venues and an audience, it's not a matter of the makers changing the way they're working. It's a matter of the people in control of the venues cultivating audiences for it. You have a festival like Ann Arbor that specializes in more innovative, experimental work, and there are people that really turn out for it. That's because they've been doing it for over 30 years. I'll bet anything that when they first started doing it, they didn't have the audience. Someone like Karen Cooper, who did the Film Forum show, is that same kind of person who takes risks, finds work that she believes in, and then people rally behind that. If she didn't, a lot of people would say, "That'll never work. Who's going to come see these idiosyncratic shorts by someone we never heard of?" All I'm saying is it takes the courage of exhibitors, programmers, and curators that then give the audiences the signal, the permission to come. And then we've opened up the possibilities of what's out there. Because what we get to see is so narrow.

For Rosenblatt's films, contact Canyon Cinema [films@canyoncinema.com]. For his videos, see www.jayrosenblattfilms.com (individuals); institutions should contact Transit Media [tmcndy@aol.com].

Michael Fox is a San Francisco journalist and film critic, and the host of KQED's Independent View.

FAQ & INFO

DISTRIBUTOR EDITION

CANYON CINEMA

BY LISSA GIBBS



The staff of Canyon Cinema (clockwise from top left) Pamela Harris, bookkeeper; Dominic Angerame, executive director; Klara Grunning, part time assistant; Mark Toscano, assistant director/film traffic controller.

2325 Third St., Ste. 338,
San Francisco,
CA 94107;
ph/fax: (415) 626-2255;
films@canyoncinema.com;
www.canyoncinema.com;
contact: Dominic Angerame,
executive director

What is Canyon Cinema?
Canyon Cinema is a film distribution organization of living filmmakers that distributes, supports, promotes, and preserves independent cinematic works of art.

Who is Canyon Cinema?
Dominic Angerame, executive director; Mark Toscano, assistant director & film traffic controller; Pamela Harris, bookkeeper; and Klara Grunning, part-time assistant. Current Board of Directors: Susanne Cockrell, Anna Geyer, Owen Land, Elizabeth Sher, and Clair Bain. Nathaniel Dorksy is a Board Advisor.

How, when, and why did Canyon come into being?
Canyon Cinema was formed around 1962. As the legend goes, Bruce Baillie, Chick Strand, and others were showing films to neighbors and friends in their backyard on a sheet tied between two trees. As the screenings and films became popular, the filmmakers realized that some form of permanent distribution had to happen along with a steady place to show the films. Hence, Canyon Cinema was started, regularly showing films and publishing a film newsletter. By 1965-66 the Canyon Cinema Cooperative had been formed. This included screenings, the publication of a newsletter, and the distribution of films by about 20-30 filmmakers from the house of Earl Bodien.

By 1966-67 Canyon became an official film distribution corporation dedicated to the distribution, promotion, and preservation of film as an art form. Founded as a grassroots organization to educate the public about an emerging American film culture, Canyon began with 25 members (and 40 films) who were dedicated to the necessity and possibility of film artists having an active and constructive role in the exhibition, distribution, and promotion of their own work. Policies, rental fees, and catalog descriptions were and continue to be determined by the participating members.

In the 30 years of its operations Canyon Cinema has become active as one of the world's leading distributors of experimental and independent film. At present, Canyon Cinema has 350 members in North America and abroad and distributes more than 3,000 films. Despite our dramatic increase in scale, we remain committed to the principles upon which Canyon was founded: in film, as in other disciplines, new ideas and forms evolve out of individual artistic innovations.

How are business decisions made at Canyon?
Everyday operational decisions are normally made by the executive director, often in collaboration with other staff members. Larger issues, such as royalty percentages, relocation, and policy decisions, are made by the Board of Directors in collaboration with the executive director.

What distinguishes you from other distributors?
Independent filmmakers, unlike commercial filmmakers or studio artists, rarely receive financial recompense. The money that Canyon Cinema returns to its members provides them with means to continue to make their films. We are the only distribution organization that has been consistent in the equitable return of artists' revenues; over 40% of Canyon's gross income is returned directly to the filmmakers. Any filmmaker can become a member of Canyon and have his/her films distributed. The only requirement is a nominal membership fee, the deposit of film print(s), and the review of a committee. The filmmakers write their own catalog descriptions and determine their rental rates. Fifty percent of each rental fee is returned to the filmmaker. The films on deposit with Canyon remain the property of the artist. Canyon represents filmmakers whose work spans aesthetic and cultural categories and we are the sole alternative outlet for hundreds of artists representing diverse perspectives and myriad of communities.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
Canyon Cinema's chief goal is to keep alive the active distribution of motion picture films in any format. Canyon is run, operated, and governed by filmmakers.

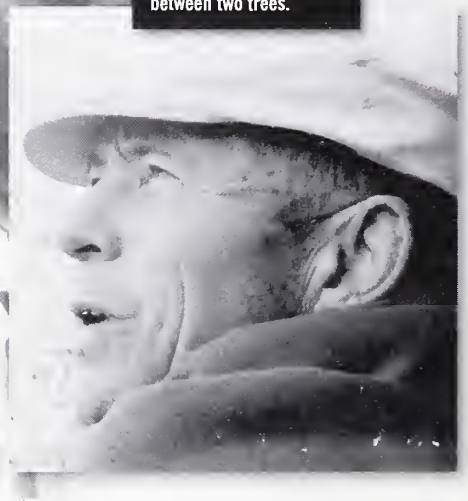
How many works are in your collection?
We rent 3,000 16mm, 35mm, super 8, regular 8 motion picture films. We also sell more than 500 VHS titles.

What types of works do you distribute?
The main part of Canyon Cinema's inventory is avant-garde/experimental films. These include abstract films, structural films, experimental narratives, documentaries, experimental personal documentaries, and animation. The length of these works range from one second to 14 hours and with production dates between 1932 and 2000.

Films and filmmakers that are part of Canyon:
Among the 350 filmmakers whose works are deposited at Canyon, many have been selected by the National Registry to have their films preserved, including *Castro Street* by Bruce Baillie (1966); *Chulas Fronteras* by Les Blank (1976); *Dog Star Man* by Stan Brakhage (1964); *Eaux d'Artifice* by Kenneth Anger (1953); *A Movie* by Bruce Conner (1958); and *Wax Experiments* by Oskar Fischinger (1932). Also distributed through Canyon Cinema are noted avant-garde filmmakers such as Gunvor Nelson, Barbara Hammer, Su

PHOTOS COURTESY CANYON CINEMA.





Canyon's founding mother, Chick Strand (left), and founding father, Bruce Baillie (below), who started screening films for friends on a sheet tied between two trees.

Friedrich, Martin Arnold, Chick Strand, James Benning, Peter Kubelka, George Kuchar, Matthias Mueller, Pat O'Neill, and Michael Snow.

Best known titles in Canyon's catalog:
The most rented titles are *Scorpio Rising; A Movie; Castro Street; Wavelength; Window Water Baby Moving, Fuses; Mujer de Milfuegos;* and *Piece Touche.*

An upcoming title to watch for:
Stan Brakhage's two-hour film.

Does Canyon promote the work of individual members?
As a policy, not really. However, if any of the staff is asked to recommend films in a genre such as optical printed films, animation films, erotic films, etc., s/he may suggest titles or filmmakers that instructors, educators, or curators may be familiar with. The executive director may program film series containing particular individual's films for promotion or screening in shows that represent the organization as a whole. Canyon does not invest in promotional materials for any of its filmmakers, outside of its own catalogs.

Where do Canyon titles generally show?
The films from Canyon are shown all around the world at festivals such as the Experimental Film Festival in Bangkok, the Experimental Film Festival in Bilbao, the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, the San Francisco International Film Festival, Frameline Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, the Film Arts Festival, Ottawa Animation Film Festival, Athens Film Festival, and at hundreds of other large and small festivals worldwide. We also provide rental prints for small film showcases, galleries, and museums. The San Francisco Cinematheque, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Anthology Film Archives, Millennium Film Workshop, Berks Filmmakers, and Walker Art Center all rent from Canyon on a regular basis. Another mainstay of film rental requests come from the film departments of hundreds of universities and colleges that have Film Studies programs or Film Production programs.

How do educators and community members find out about the titles you handle?
Every five years we publish an illustrated, comprehensive, 500-page catalog containing our full inventory descriptions, rental fees, and sale prices. *Canyon Cinema Catalog 2000* was published in the beginning of the year and is now available by sending $35 plus $7 postage to our offices.

Describe your relationship with the makers you represent:
Today, Canyon Cinema's primary activity is the distribution of 16mm films of independent film artists. Filmmakers write their own catalog descriptions and rental fees are set at $3 per minute. Fifty percent of the rental fee is returned to the filmmakers. The films on deposit with Canyon remain the property of the artist.

An advantage of the co-op structure for a filmmaker is . . .
that filmmakers have an actual voice in determining the policies and procedures at Canyon by voting directly for members of the Board of Directors who represent their interests within the organization. Canyon Cinema pays a higher royalty percentage rate than most commercial distributors, and the filmmakers still own the rights to their work as well as the films themselves.



A possible disadvantage of a co-op structure for a filmmaker is . . .
that since Canyon Cinema represents the work by more than 350 filmmakers from around the world, it becomes impossible to actively promote a single filmmaker's work, which many filmmakers find to be a disadvantage.

Biggest change at Canyon in recent years:
2000 marks the publication of a new catalog! Also, we have recently decided to sell videotapes, CD-ROMs, and other digital technologies that our *filmmaker* members may be creating. Canyon Cinema has also actively been seeking and finding many foreign film showcases and festivals that wish to rent films.

Most important issue facing Canyon today:

STRAND PHOTO: NEON PARK; BAILLIE PHOTO: DOMINIC ANGERAME

The extreme rising cost of operating from the Bay Area. Rents here are escalating beyond belief and our lease runs out in just over a year; we are expecting our rent to quadruple at that time. We would like to remain in the Bay Area and are asking everyone to help us find a secure rental space for the near and distant future.

Where will Canyon be 10 years from now?
We believe that there is a Renaissance happening in experimental filmmaking and that an organization such as Canyon will be in a good place 10 years from now. Motion picture films will be very valuable works of art.

Other distributors you admire:
There are only four distribution organizations (that we know of) such as Canyon around the world. We



From top left: Penelope Alice in Chick Strand's film *Coming Up for Air.*

From Martin Arnold's *Alone, Life Wastes Andy Hardy.*

Stay where I can see you: Su Friedrich's *Sink or Swim.*

admire all of them for continuing their efforts to pursue the expansion of cinema as an art form: Canadian Distribution Centre, Ontario; Light Cone in Paris; Film-Makers' Cooperative, New York City; and Six Pack Film in Vienna.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
keep making films.

Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o The Independent, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013; or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*



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THE PLAYBOY FOUNDATION

BY MICHELLE COE

The Playboy Foundation



Cleo Wilson, Playboy Foundation's Executive Director.

The Playboy Foundation, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 373-2435; giving@playboy.com; www.playboy.com/corporate/foundation/index.html; Cleo Wilson, Executive Director

What is the Playboy Foundation?
The Playboy Foundation is not a foundation, but in fact an operating department and charitable giving program of Playboy Enterprises, Inc. (PEI).

Who makes up the Foundation?
The Playboy Foundation is governed by a board of directors made up of employees who are senior managers in the company, including the company Chairman and CEO Christie Hefner; the Foundation's first executive director, Burton Joseph, who now serves as chairman of the board of directors; and its current executive director, Cleo Wilson.

When and why did the Playboy Foundation come into being?
As *Playboy* magazine rose in prominence in the late '50s and early '60s, its aims and outlook were given considerable comment in the press, particularly journals of social, philosophical, and religious opinion. Continually called upon to explain his editorial beliefs, Hugh Hefner decided to write the *Playboy Philosophy*, an analysis of the social and moral questions arising in a changing society. The first installment appeared in *Playboy's* ninth anniversary issue in December 1962 and ran to 25 installments, the last published in January 1966. The *Philosophy* caused many people to begin writing to the magazine. In 1965, in response to letters that the magazine had received from victims of draconian and antiquated laws, Hefner established the Playboy Foundation "to pursue, perpetuate, and promote the principals of freedom and democracy."

The driving philosophy behind the Playboy Foundation is . . .
fostering open communication about human sexuality, reproductive health and rights, protecting and fostering civil rights and civil liberties in the United States for all people, and protecting freedom of expression.

How has the funding climate for independent media changed since the Foundation's inception?
We began providing grants for postproduction and distribution for documentary films in 1979. At that time, there were very few foundations awarding grants to media projects. Despite the power of film to serve as a catalyst for social change, some 20 years later there continues to be very few corporate or private foundations willing to support filmmakers.

What percentage of the Playboy Foundation's overall budget goes towards individual film and video projects?
There is not a fixed percentage of the Playboy Foundation's budget that goes towards media projects, so the amount fluctuates from year to year.

How many media awards are given out per year? What is the total dollar amount awarded annually?
On average, we award about 10-12 grants per year for a total of between $25,000 and $30,000 per year.

What is the average size of a grant?
Our grants are small, usually between $1,000 and $5,000. However, on occasion, the board of directors will find a film that closely fits our guidelines or approaches a subject in an especially innovative way and award a larger grant.

How many applications do you get on average per year?
It should come as no surprise that, since there are so few foundations awarding media grants, those of us that do are inundated with proposals. The Playboy Foundation receives between one and three grant proposals from filmmakers per week—up to 36 per year. That may not seem like much, but when you factor in that we also receive grant requests from other organizations involved in the issues we support, it can be daunting.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications?
Since the language of film is universal, there are



no geographic or ethnic limitations. However, we only provide funding to documentary film and video projects.

Do you fund projects at various stages of production? Can individuals come back to you during these stages?
We only fund film and video projects in the post production stage. If a film is in postproduction for more than a year, the filmmaker can come back to us for funding, but only one grant per project is awarded in a calendar year.

What types of projects does the Playboy Foundation seek?
The Playboy Foundation funds issues. We look for documentary film and video projects that identify injustices and advocate for social and political change. We usually fund projects with small budgets. We don't often support films with large budgets because those films traditionally can get money from other sources. Films with large budgets are usually made by very experienced filmmakers with a track record of getting backers or foundation support. Once in a while, however, the subject matter is so compelling, we award a grant anyway.

Clockwise from top left:

Karen Wilson and Bill Sims, subjects of Jennifer Fox's *An American Love Story*.

Two men dance together in an 1895 Thomas Edison film as seen in Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's *The Celluloid Closet*.

Doc subject Barbara Gittings (left) in *Out of the Past*.

Hannah, from *Dialogues with Madwomen*, produced by Allie Light and Irvine Saraf.

LEVINE; *OUT OF THE PAST* PHOTO: KAY TOBIN LAHUSEN, COURTESY ZEITGEIST/UNAPIX

Name some of the best-known titles and/or artists you have funded. What have been some of the distribution paths of those projects?
Some films for which we have provided funding include: *The Times of Harvey Milk* (Rob Epstein and Kurt Schemiechen), *An American Love Story* (Jennifer Fox), *Radium City* (Carole Langer), *Building Bombs* (Mark Mori), *Damned in the USA* (Jonathan Stack), *Jupiter's Wife* (Michel Negroponte), *Paragraph 175* and *The Celluloid Closet* (both by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman), *Out of the Past* (Jeff Dupre), *La Boda* (Hanna Weyer), *Nuyorican Dream* (Laurie Collyer), *The Girl Next Door* (Christine Fugate), as well as many lesser known film and video titles. Some of these films have gone on to win festival awards, an Emmy, and even an Academy Award.

The Foundation awards their Freedom of Expression Award each year at the Sundance Film Festival to recognize an outstanding documentary and its maker. Describe this award and its purpose.
Concerned that great documentary films and videos were not being seen, the Playboy Foundation, in collaboration with the Sundance Institute, created the Freedom of Expression Award in 1989 to recognize the film that best investigates, educates and informs the public on an issue of social concern. In contrast to the awards for Directing, Excellence in Cinematography, Screenwriting, etc. where the awards are given for production values, style, etc., our award is the only prize that celebrates what a film is about—its content. Sometimes the winner of the Freedom of Expression Award-winning film has won one of the other five major awards, but in most years, that has not been the case. The award has been given to video projects: *Heart of the Matter*, which follows one woman's struggle with AIDS; *When Billy Broke His Head . . . and Other Tales of Wonder*, which follows Billy Golfus, who is both subject and co-director, as he and other disabled Americans come to terms with their physical disabilities; and *Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary*, which explores the impact of California's Proposition 187, which would eliminate education and health benefits for non-documented immigrants. The winner of the 2000 Freedom of Expression Award is Marc Singer's *Dark Days*. No matter how great the subject matter, video projects traditionally have not won the other prizes. The Freedom of Expression changed that.

How is this award recipient decided?
The Playboy Foundation's Freedom of Expression award winner(s) is selected (independently of all other award categories) by the Documentary Competition Jury of the Festival. The jurors specifically select a film for our award, just as they do for the other awards. Sometimes the jury can't decide on one film and has awarded the prize to two films: In 1994, *Dialogues with Madwomen* and *Heart of the Matter* shared the award. Again in 1997, *Fear and Learning in Hoover Elementary* and *Family Name* won. Each year the winner(s) receive $5,000, in the case of a tie, they share the award.

Do you give awards at other film festivals?
We provide modest support in the form of direct grants to other film festivals in the cities in which we have offices, including the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, the Chicago International Film Festival, the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival and the New York Documentary Film Festival. We also support other festivals that dovetail with our mission: civil liberties and civil rights. In addition, we provide support to *P.O.V.*

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
We don't have a funding cycle per se. We accept proposals on a continuing basis.

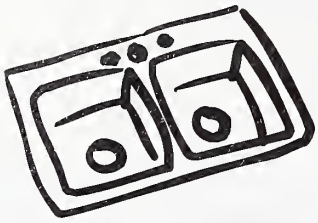
Since the foundation doesn't have hard deadlines, what is the average turnaround time from when an applicant submits a proposal to when s/he finds out whether or not s/he received funding?
In most cases, a grantseeker can expect to hear back from us either way within a month with winners receiving the check following shortly thereafter.

Once the applicant receives funding, are there time-frame limitations within which the funds may be used? Can the same individual apply for funds two years in a row?
When we award a grant, we expect that it will be used in the calendar year in which it is received. If the project is not completed by the next calendar year, the applicant can reapply.

Who are the program officers for the media fund?
As a small corporate giving program, we have no program officers. The foundation is comprised of an executive director and a half-time assistant. This at times may mean that you don't hear from us as soon as you would like, but we are open to receiving phone calls. But before you send your proposal, please note: we do not fund dramatic films, nor do we fund films in production. Your proposal should be short and to the point and include a rough-cut.

Applicants must apply through a fiscal sponsor. Do you have any insight or advice for working with a fiscal agent as an individual artist?
We do not fund individuals, so you must have a fiscal agent. A few of the agencies that we have worked with include the Film Arts Foundation, Women Make Movies, and Frameline Films. There are more, but check them out. Some filmmakers have set up their own 501(c)(3) organizations. A fiscal sponsor will require a percentage of the grant, so you want to find the agency that works best for you.

Who makes the awards decisions? Name a few of your past panelists?
As stated before, the executive director usually makes the decisions for media grants. However, in some cases when a larger grant (more than $5,000) is awarded, the Playboy Foundation's board of directors makes those decisions. We



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have no outside panel.

In what situations have you awarded larger amounts?

In the case of *Damned in the USA* by Jonathan Stack, which examined censorship, the proposal came along at a time when the company was facing serious attempts at censorship from the religious right. In 1998, the Foundation board awarded $10,000 to *Defending Everybody: A History of the American Civil Liberties Union*. In these instances, it was the subject matter that led the board to its funding decision.

Tell us about your review process.

Our grantmaking process is fairly easy and straightforward. The executive director, who reads the proposal and watches the rough-cut, makes most decisions regarding media grants. For larger grants, the Board of Directors get involved: Christie Hefner, Chairman & CEO, Playboy Enterprises, Inc. (P.E.I.); Burton Joseph, Chairman, Board of Directors, Playboy Foundation; Richard Rosenzweig, Executive Vice-President, P.E.I.; Howard Shapiro, Executive Vice-President Law & Administration, P.E.I.; Cindy P. Rakowitz, Vice-President, Public Relations & Promotions, P.E.I.; David Walker, Editorial Director, International Publishing, P.E.I.; Jeffrey M. Jenest, Executive Vice-President, Playboy Entertainment Group; and James R. Petersen, Senior Staff Writer, *Playboy* Magazine. The only person on the board with real expertise in filmmaking is Jeffrey Jenest, Executive VP for the Playboy Entertainment Group, which produces adult programming for Playboy TV networks, DVD, and DTH. The rest of us are just film buffs.

What are the things you are thinking about when you are scanning a filmmaker's proposal and are watching their rough cut?

First I look at the paperwork: Will the subject matter advance or promote the Foundation's mission? What is the filmmaker's experience in making films and raising money? Who are the other funders? Can the filmmaker raise enough money or find enough backers to see the project through to completion? What is the distribution plan? Who is its intended audience? Is there a fiscal sponsor? etc. Then I sit down and look at the trailer or rough cut: How does it look? Does it do what the filmmaker intended? Will the Foundation be proud to have its name associated with the project? If the answers are in the affirmative to most of these questions, we usually award it a grant. I only compare one film to another when a project has been done before. Then I ask myself, what makes this one different or better?

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?

We are interested in a film's content. A strong application includes a rough cut and a two- to three-page narrative, which includes a description of the project and film summary, a distribution plan and (the applicant's) experience in filmmaking, along with the names and qualifications of people involved with the project. Of course, it should also include the project budget and other proposed funding sources. (Most times when a filmmaker comes to us, the completion funds are in place, and s/he needs $1,000-$5,000 for the soundtrack, mixing, travel funds for that last interview, or for an education brochure to accompany the film.) Proposals should also include the IRS letter from the fiscal sponsor.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?

Usually not doing enough up-front research to learn what type of media projects the Playboy Foundation funds. We get proposals from people who are making dramatic films or films that do not address an issue. If the applicant reads the guidelines and requests a list of past films we have funded, it should be clear.

What would people be most surprised to learn about the Foundation and/or its founders?

Most people are surprised to learn that we have a giving program at all. When I tell them that Hugh Hefner established it in 1965, they are even more surprised.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire and why.

I admire all the other foundations that have enough courage to fund media. They are serving as an example and making a difference.

What distinguishes the Playboy Foundation from other foundations?

I like to think that the Playboy Foundation serves a unique niche. Many of the projects we fund are small. Of course, we are happy when a film or video project we have supported wins awards, but that is not why we do it. We truly hope that the film will move people to question, to act—to make the world a better place.

Famous last words?

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. Imagine the power of a moving picture. We can move mountains.

Michelle Coe is program director at AIVF.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (JAN. 1 FOR MARCH ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: SCOTT@AIVF.ORG

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BOSTON UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 22-24, MA. Deadlines: Dec. 15 (early); Jan. 14 (final). 3rd annual fest of the devious, depraved & defiant. Looking for short & feature films that are radical & experimental in either content or production value, incl. features, docs, shorts, animation & experimental films. Cats: short and feature film submissions are accepted. Awards: Bacchus Bunny Awards will be given in the following cats: Best of Festival, Most Offensive, Most Experimental, Best Narrative, Best Non-Narrative & an Audience Award. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, VHS (NTSC or PAL), 3/4". Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: early, $35 (feature, over 60 min.); $15 (short, under 60 min.); late, $40 (features); $20 (shorts). Contact: BUFF, 441 Washington St., #2, Brookline, MA 02446; (617) 975-3361; localsightings@worldnet.att.net; www.localsightings.com

DURANGO FILM FESTIVAL, March 10-18, CO. Deadline: Jan. 2. Inagural fest seeks to "entertain & educate community, and to encourage & empower artist." Fest will screen independent feature films, docs, animation, shorts & new media works and incl. educational salons, panel discussions, receptions & parties. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation. Awards: Jury Prize, Best First Feature, Best Short, Best Doc, Best Animation, Filmmakers' Prize, Audience Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, DVCAM, DV, DVD. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $40 (feature, 50 min. or more); $30 (short, under 50 min.); $25 (student). Contact: DFF, Box. 241, Durango, CO 81302; (970) 259-2291; lotta@outerbounds.net; www.durangofilmfestival.com

EAST LANSING FILM FESTIVAL, March 22-25, MI. Deadlines: Dec. 15; Jan. 5 (late). 4th annual, largest, most diverse film fest in Michigan screens all genres of independent & foreign films. Cats: feature, doc, short, student, children. Awards: "Michigan's Own Film Competition" awarding all cats with cash/prizes; Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15-25; $25-35 (late). Contact: ELFF, Box 4880, East Lansing, MI 48826; (517) 336-5802; fax: 336-2750; jwelff@aol.com; www.elff.com

FIRSTGLANCE: PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, PA. Deadline: Dec. 15. 4th annual fest encourages student & professional film- and videomakers with any budget for underground. alternative film event whose mission is to exhibit all genres of work (film, video & digital productions) from mainstream to controversial in a competitive casual atmosphere. Cats: feature (over 60 min.); narrative (under 60 min.), doc (under 60 min.), experimental, animation, student. Awards incl. airline tickets, t-shirts, cash & other prizes. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30; $25 (students). Contact: FirstGlance, Box 571105, Tarzana, CA 91356; (818) 464-3544; ww.newimaging.com

HI/LO FILM FESTIVAL, March 1-4, CA. Deadlines: Dec. 15 (early); Dec. 31 (final) Non-competitive fest "celebrates films w/ high concepts & low budgets for the adventurous & disenchanted." Any genre, any subject, any length. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, digital, Hi-8, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15; $20 (late); make checks payable to: Killing My Lobster. Contact: HLFF, Box 170309, San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 487-9817; hilo@killingmylobster.com; www.killingmylobster.com/hilo/

HUMBOLDT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 3-7, CA. Deadline: Jan. 26. 34th annual fest announces its call for entries. Fest has the distinction of being the oldest student-run film festival in the world. Fest screenings are held at the oldest continuously operating film house in the country, the Minor Theater. Films under 60 min. in length & completed w/in the last three years are eligible. Cats: narrative, doc, animation, experimental & the "you call it""category. Awards: Last year's fest awarded over $3,000 worth of cash prizes, film stock, editing services & magazine subscriptions. Formats: 16mm, super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: HIFF, Dept. of Theater, Film & Dance Humboldt State Univ., Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-4113; fax: 826-4112; filmfest@axe.humboldt.edu; www.humboldt.edu/~ theatre/filmfest.html

LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, April, CA. Deadline: Jan. 6. A program of the L.A. Film Collaborative, fest was launched in 1995. Last year's attendance topped 27,000 & featured 60 films, 15 seminars, an independent film retrospective, a music video showcase & the annual New Media Forum. Fest is open to films completed after January 1, 1999 w/ one of the film's principles (director, writer, or producer) being from N. America. Cats: feature, doc, short, animation, experimental, music video, student, script. Awards: Critic's Prize, Best Director, Audience Awards for Best Short & Best Feature. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $45-$65 (features, 50 min. & over); $25-$35 (shorts, under 50 min.); $20-$30 (up to three music videos). Contact: LAIFF, Brian Younce, Managing Dir., (323) 951-7090; fax: 937-7770; info@laiff.com; www.laiff.com

MAGNOLIA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 8- 10, MS. Deadline: Jan 19. 4th annual fest will screen 30 independent films. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards: Cash prizes plus "Mags" will be presented incl. three Grand Jury Awards, Audience Award, Elena Zastawnik Memorial Award for Best Written Film & Festival Director's Award. Filmmakers who attend stay free. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: MIFF, Ron Tibbett, Fest Dir., 2269 Waverly Dr., West Point, MS 39773; (662) 494-5836; www.magfilmfest.com

NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, March 7-13, NY. Deadline: Dec. 1(regular); Jan 1 (late). NYC's premiere showcase for films that go beyond mainstream expectations & commercial concerns. Cats: narrative feature, narrative short, doc, animation, experimental. Awards: Juried prizes for Best Feature, Best Short, Best Doc, Best Animation, Best Experimental, plus the Festival Choice Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 1/2", super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: NYUFF, Ed Halter, 453 W16th St., Office Six, New York, NY 10011; (212) 675-1137; fax: 675-1152; festival@nyuff.com; www.nyuff.com

ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 2-5, NY. Deadline: Dec. 15 (early); Jan. 26 (final). 43rd annual fest is the longest-running film event dedicated to the art of short film & video. Open to all films & videos completed since Jan. 1, 1999 & under 30 min. in length. Awards: hand-made Shoestring Trophies. Formats: 8mm, super 8, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (early); $30 (final). Contact: RIFF, Movies on a Shoestring, Box 17746, Rochester, NY 14617; (716) 242-0191; President@RochesterFilmFest.org; www.RochesterFilmFest.org

THAW, March, IA. Deadline: Jan. 15. Fest celebrating independent, difficult, radical & remarkable moving images seeks experimental work, film, video, digital video, CD-ROM, web sites, audio. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Fest encourages submission of any kind of work that challenges convention; welcomes student, professional & int'l artists. Fest incl. screenings, retrospectives, performances, juror presentations, parties and hospitality. For jurying purposes, will accept film & video entries on VHS (NTSC only). Digital work may be submitted on CD-ROM or

Subterranean Chowder Blues

Organizers of the Boston Underground Film Festival have a soft spot for dangerous films. "Anything labeled underground has to be in part subversive, in part potentially offensive," declares festival organizer David Kleiler. The festival was begun in an effort to screen a certain kind of film that wasn't getting seen in the Boston area. Now such films can compete for the title of "Most Offensive" at this third annual event, organized by Local Sighting, a Brookline company also run by Kleiler, which devotes itself to helping filmmakers get their work made, seen, and sold. While the fledgling fest receives submissions from around the world, it tries to keep the focus on New England filmmakers. See listing.



BUFF festival winners receive the coveted Bacchus Bunny Awards.

CALL FOR ENTRIES
BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
APRIL 20th - 26th, 2001
A celebration of the art of cinema showcasing the best work of exceptional filmmakers from around the world. Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary, Best Short plus the Audience Choice Award. Deadline for entries is 1 December 2000. Works-in-progress welcome provided final print will be ready by 1 April 2001. See web site for entry form or contact us by phone or fax.
Web Site: bermudafilmfest.com
E-mail: bdafilm@ibl.bm
Tel: (441) 293-3456 • Fax: (441) 293-7769
Eager audiences, pink beaches and major parties – join us!





as URL. Film producers whose work is selected will be asked to provide 16mm print. Cats: no categories, just your work. Awards: cash prizes will be awarded for exemplary work. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2",Beta SP, CD-ROM, Web. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15 (30 min. or less; also CD-ROMs & web sites); $30 (works longer than 30 min.). Contact: THAW, Institute for Cinema & Culture, 162 BCSB, Iowa City, IA 52242; (319) 335-1348; fax: 335-1774; thaw@uiowa.edu; www.uiowa.edu/ ~thaw

UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Feb. 16-18, NJ. Deadline: Jan. 19. 13th annual fest encourages any genre (animation, doc, experimental, fiction, personal, etc) but work must have predominantly originated on super 8 film or 8mm video. Last year's festival drew a large audience which viewed 25 finalist works out of 140 entries from throughout the U.S. & Canada over three evenings. Fest takes as its mandate the spreading of the 8mm & digital word. Toward that end, the Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC has sponsored seven touring programs, culled from fest winners for the past seven years, which have travelled extensively for the last five yrs. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: $2,500 in cash and prizes; selected winners go on Best of Fest Int'l Tour. Formats: S-8, Hi-8, 16mm, 8mm, 1/2", 3/4", DV. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35 (check or money order payable to Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC. Do not send cash). Contact: USS8FVF, Rutgers Film Co-op/New Jersey Media Arts Center, 131 George St. (108 Ruth Adams Bldg-Douglass Campus),Program in Cinema Studies, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.rci.rutgers.edu/~nigrin

WASHINGTON DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 18-29. DC. Deadline: Jan. 14. 15th annual fest that brings "best in new world cinema" to nation's capital. Known as Filmfest DC, fest presents over 70 feature premieres, restored classics & special events. All are DC premieres. Fest attempts to represent the broad geographical diversity of world cinema, the newest films of emerging countries & the latest work from newly recognized young directors. Attendance last edition totaled 37,000. Cats: feature, doc, animation, children. Fest is noncompetitive except for an Audience Award given to the most popular film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (features); $15 (shorts, under 30 min.). Contact: Tony Gittens, Festival Dir., Box 21396, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 724-5613; fax: 724-6578; filmfestdc@filmfestdc.org; www.filmfestdc.org

WILLIAMSBURG BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, May 3-9, NY. Deadline: Jan. 15; March 15 (late). 4th annual fest, held at Brooklyn's Commodore Theater, incl. Q&A sessions, panel discussions & live broadcast over the Internet. Cats: feature, experimental, doc, short. Awards: Best film will be awarded the "Grand Chameleon Award" ($30,000 in services). Winners in each cat will be awarded the "Chameleon" statuette. Formats: All formats accepted. Preview on VHS (non-returnable). Entry fees: $40; $50 (late). Contact: WBFF, Marco Ursino, Fest Dir, 180 South 4th St., Ste. 2 South, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-4306; fax: 599-5039; marco@wbff.org; www.wbff.org

WORLDFEST HOUSTON, April 20-29, TX. Deadlines: Dec. 15 (early); Jan. 15 (final). 34th annual fest will screen 45-50 feature film premieres, with a complete & absolute emphasis on the American & int'l Independent feature films & w/ a continuing annual spotlight on an individual country & its films. Fest also incl. Short Film Showcase, a special review

of 100 new short & student films. Cats: over 250 categories (see web site for complete list). Awards: Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Preview on VHS, 3/4", super VHS, Beat SP. Entry fees: $45-$150; $10 (additional for late entries). Contact WorldFest-Houston, Box 56566, Houston, Texas 77256; (713) 965-9955; fax: 965-9960; Worldfest@aol.com; www.worldfest.org

Foreign

BERGAMO FILM MEETING, March 17-25, Italy. Deadline: Jan. 31. 19th annual fest incl. the following sections: Retrospectives, Cult Movies, Cinema History, Competition. The competition is only for full-length feature films: no videos, docs or shorts. Awards: Golden, Silver & Bronze "Rosa Camuna" (the symbol of the Lombardia region) awarded by the audience of the fest (journalists, critics, producers, distributors, & cinema fans). Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BFM, Fiammetta Girola, General Secretary, BFM, Via G. Reich, 49, 24020 Torre Boldone (Bg), Italy ; 011 39035 363087; fax: 39035 341255; bfm@alasca.it; www.alasca.it/bfm

OBERHAUSEN INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, May 3-8, Germany. Deadline: Jan. 15. The world's oldest short film fest offers a forum for aesthetic & technological innovation and reflection. There are no limits as to form or genre but films in the Int'l & Children's Competitions must not exceed 35 min. & have been made after Jan. 1 1999. All submitted works will be viewed by an independent selection committee appointed by the fest. Approx. 70 titles will be selected for the Int'l Competition. Awards incl. Grand Prize, Most Humorous, Jury of Int'l Film Critics award & Prize of the Catholic Film Assoc. Works will compete for prizes worth a total of 75,000 DEM (approx. $32,000). Formats: 8mm, 16mm, 35 mm, S-VHS, U-matic (PAL, SECAM, NTSC), Beta-SP/PAL Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: OISFF, Sabine Niewalda, Int'l Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Grillostr. 34, D-46045 Oberhausen, Germany; 011 49 208 825 3073; fax: 49 208 825 5413; info@kurzfilmtage.de; www.kurzfilmtage.de

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL, June 8-22, Australia. Deadlines: Jan. 30 (features); Feb. 19 (shorts & docs). This major FIAPF-recognized event is one of world's oldest (over 45 years old) & leading int'l showcase for new work screening around 200 films. Noncompetitive int'l program incl. features & docs; experimental works; retro; competition for Australian shorts; late shows & forums w/ visiting directors. All Australian distributors & TV buyers attend. Fest has enthusiastic & loyal audience & is excellent opportunity for publicity & access to Australian markets. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers; results have good deal of influence w/ Australian distribs. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 months & be Australian premieres. Entry open to features, docs, shorts (under 30 min.) & videos from around the world. Cats: short, experimental, doc, feature, retro. Awards for Australian-produced short films (under 60 min.) & docs only. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP (PAL). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Filmmakers wishing their tapes returned must pay a fee of $20 (Aus) to cover cost of return postage; use int'l bank draft, personal checks not accepted. Contact: SFF, Jenny Neighbour, Box 950/405 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia; 011 61 2 9660 3844; fax: 61 2 9692 8793; info@sydfilm-fest.com.au; www.sydfilm-fest.com.au

the 4th annual
the Double Take documentary film festival
may 3-6, 2001
durham, north carolina
call for entries
deadline: december 28
late deadline: january 8
35mm, 16mm, betacam, digital video
for information and entry forms:
919.660.3699
ddff@duke.edu
www.ddff.org
in association with the center for documentary studies at duke university

MAGNOLIA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL
FEB. 8,9, & 10, 2001 • STARKVILLE, MS
Our 4th annual "Mag" welcomes all lengths, all genres. Cash awards, "Mags" given. Entries screened in 35mm, 16mm, Beta, VHS. No entry fee. Filmmakers who attend stay free. Congrats to last "Mag" winners: Mike Goscia's "Captive Audience", Marlene Rhein's "Let Me Tell You A Story", Bill Brown's "Confederation Park", Katherine Griffin's "The Innocents", and Dennis J. Courtney's "Araby".
For entry form write to:
Ron Tibbett, Festival Director
Magnolia Independent Film Festival
2269 Waverly Dr.
West Point, MS 39773
Phone (601) 494-5836
Fax (601) 494-9900
www.magfilmfest.com
Entry deadline Jan. 19, 2001

THE 3RD ANNUAL
CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FUND
NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!
CASH GRANTS AWARDED FOR POST-PRODUCTION OF FILMS THAT DEFY THE MAINSTREAM AND PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF FILMMAKING
ALL GENRES AND FORMATS ELIGIBLE
FUND DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 5, 2001
773.327.3456
WWW.CUFF.ORG
DEADLINE FOR THE 8TH ANNUAL CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL APRIL 7, 2001
THE CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL
SHELTER FROM DEADLY INDIEWOOD FALLOUT

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. THE INDEPENDENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JAN. 1 FOR MARCH ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

COMPETITIONS

AMERICAN SCREENWRITERS ASSOCIATION is sponsoring new contest Screenwriting from the Soul, dedicated to finding, "the most heartwarming, soulful story of the year." Grand Prize: $500 script consultation & dinner w/ Richard Krevolin, USC Screenwriting Professor & author of *Screenwriting from the Soul*. Entry fees: $25/ASA menbers; $35/non-members; Deadline: Feb. 29. Contact: ASA, Box 12860, Cincinnati, OH 45212; (513) 731-9212; johnj@asascreenwriters.com; www.asascreenwriters.com

BIGSTAR.COM: call for submissions from independent filmmakers for NY-based BigStar Broadband Film Festival, seeking to showcase best features, shorts & animations. Festival runs all year on BigStar starting spring. As a participant in festival, visitors to BigStar will be able to view your film—in full length—over their Internet connection using BigStar's Broadband Theater player. Films viewable in entirety 24/7. No entry fee. Contact: independentfilms@bigstar.com

COLUMBUS SCREENPLAY DISCOVERY AWARDS: To bridge gap between writers & entertainment industry. One screenplay accepted monthly to receive rewrite notes from script consultant. Awards: Up to $10,000 option, script analysis, film courses, conferences, software. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $55. Contact: Columbus Screenplay Discovery Awards, 433 North Camden Dr., Ste. 600, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (310) 288-1988; fax: 288-0257; awards@HollywoodNetwork.com; www.HollywoodNetwork.com

CONVERGENCE 2001 INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL SEPT. 8-24: Providence Parks Dept., Office of Cultural Affairs seeks assorted media/mixed-media proposals. Work will be installed throughout downtown area. Work must be weather-resistant & able to withstand public interaction. All proposals must be accompanied by samples of recent work—not to exceed 20 slides—reviews & resume. Requests for funding not to exceed $2,000. Materials not returned without s.a.s.e. w/ proper postage. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Providence Parks Dept., Office of Cultural Affairs, 400 Westminster St, 4th fl. Providence, RI 02903; (401) 621-1992; info@caparts.org; www.caparts.org

DOCTOBER qualifies feature & short length films for Academy Award consideration. All films entered into IDA Awards competition considered for invitation to DOCtober, as long as they meet following minimum requirement: screening format must exist on film (16mm or 35mm); no broadcast, or other television airing anytime prior to, nor within 6 months following first day of festival; only individual doc films eligible. Early Bird deadline (w/ discount) April 15. Final deadline May 15. Festival programmers will invite selected films that meet these requirements by August 15. A co-op fee may apply for festival screening. For further info regarding DOCtober, contact: Melissa Simon Disharoon, Programs & Festival Administrator at (310) 284-8422 x. 65 or download DOCtober/IDA Awards entry form from IDA website at www.documentary.org

DRAMA GARAGE THURSDAY NIGHT SCRIPT READING SERIES: Drama Garage holds once a month script reading at Occidental Studios in Los Angeles w/ a professional director & professional actors. Writer chosen receives copy of Final Draft software & is interviewed by IntheBiz.net, a web site & private networking org for assistants in entertainment industry to agents & producers who are looking for new talent. Deadline: monthly. Entry fee: $25. For appl. see web site for rules & submission info. Contact: Drama Garage Thursday Night Script Reading Series, 1861 N. Whitley, Ste. 205, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 993-5700; www.dramagarage.com

ENTRIES WANTED FOR 2001 JAN KARSKI COMPETITION for outstanding television docs produced on theme of moral courage. Deadline: Dec 31. 3 entries each year receive cash awards. Winning entries will be chosen & winners notified by April 1. Programs must be no longer than 60 min., on VHS format, & completed after Jan 1 1997. Entry fee: $25. Also required: short synopsis of film (250 words max.), program credits & producer contact info. Contact Sy Rotter at wlo@cais.com; for more info on Documentaries Int'l, access: www.moralcourage.org

ERIK BARNOUW AWARD recognizes outstanding reporting or programming on network or cable television, or in doc film concerned w/ American history, the study of American history, &/or the promotion of history. Only works released in 2000 eligible for award to be given in 2001. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Erik Barnouw Award, Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408; (812) 855-9852; fax: 855-0696; kara@ oah.org

FILM ESCAPADE: Juried competition seeks shorts & features. Cash prizes. Cats: narrative, doc, animation, experimental, music video. preview formats: VHS, 16mm. Entry fees: $15 (shorts); $20 (features). Deadline: Dec 10. To enter, send s.a.s.e. to: Miller/McCann Film Escapade, Box 54320, Philadelphia, PA 19105; fax: (610) 992-9128; FilmMiller@aol.com; Dziga24@aol.com; www.filmescapade.freeservers.com

HOLLYWOOD SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST: To provide new valuable outlet for recognizing & promoting quality scripts of undiscovered writers worldwide. Registered feature films (no TV dramas or sitcoms) in English; motion picture standard master scene format required. Must be unoptioned, btwn. 90 & 130 pages. Rules & requirement in full detail submitted to each applicant. Awards: Winning script sent to agent who will forward it to appropriate producer. 1 year's subscription to *Creative Screenwriting*; synopsis published on Internet by GreatScripts.com for filmmakers registered with GreatScripts.com, which includes all major studios seeking new screenplays. Entry fee: $50 (money order or credit card). Deadline: monthly, postmarked by 15th of each month. Contact: 1605 Cahuenga Blvd., Ste. 213, Hollywood, CA 90028; (800)-SCRIPT; hwdscreen@aol.com; www.moviewriting.com

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: To give experience, feedback & direction as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer, or development company sit up & take notice. May enter 1-page synopsis of screenplay you've already written, or a screenplay you intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft, plus free Script Detail of screenplay of your choice. Deadline: last day of every month. Only on-line entries accepted; info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/hollywood/entry-form.html

LAUGHING HORSE PRODUCTIONS announces its 3rd Annual Screenplay Contest. Seeking compelling scripts of every genre—"scripts yet to receive attention they deserve." Scripts must be in standard screenplay format. & have copyright or be registered w/ the WGA. Entry & release form must be sent w/ each screenplay. Entry fee: $45. Deadline: April 30. Prizes incl. 1st: Bert Remsen Memorial Scholarship of $1,000 & performed readings in Los Angeles & Seattle. 2nd: Bert Remsen Memorial Scholarship of $500. For more info, release form, or appl., visit: www.geocities.com/lhprods

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted, contest limited to first 500 entries. First prize: $1,500. Deadlines: Dec. 29 (early); Jan. 31 (final). Entry fees: $40 (early); $50 (final). Rules & entry forms at avail. on website or send s.a.s.e. to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (831) 646-0910; mryfilm@aol.com; www.filmmonterey.com

NTV-FILM SCREENPLAY CONTEST for feature-length scripts. All genres accepted. Winning script will be purchased for production by NTV (you must have rights). Send script w/ $40 entry fee payable to NTV, 21 Central Park West, Ste. 1T, NY, NY 10023.

ORIGINAL MOVIE SCENE CONTEST: You're invited to craft a sensational movie scene (1,500-2,000 words) in which La Grande Dame Champagne is the star. The winning scene posted on web site & the grand prize "An Academy Award Weekend for Two." Deadline: Dec. 31. Send double-spaced, typed, original scene to Vanity Fair Promotion Dept., 350 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017, Attn: La Grande Dame Contest; (212) 888-7575; www.clicquot.com

OUROBOROS PRODUCTIONS SCREENWRITING CONTEST 2001 is open to anyone w/ a creative vision & a feature length work. All genres welcome. Grand prize: $2,000. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: Feb 28. For rules & guidelines, an application, & synopsis form, visit web site. Contact: Ouroboros Productions, 236 W. Portal Ave., Box 338, San Francisco, CA 94127; www.ouroborosproductions.com

PLASTIC ENTERTAINMENT $10,000 SCREENPLAY CONTEST for unproduced feature length scripts. Deadline: Dec. 31. $10,000 grand prize. All genres. No restrictions. Winning script (and others) may be further optioned or purchased for production by Plastic Entertainment, Inc. (you retain all rights until sale is negotiated). Send script with $40 entry fee (check or money order), payable to: Plastic Entertainment, Inc., 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hollywood, CA 90069.

"READY FOR PBS" DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION. Citizens for Independent Broadcasting now accepting English language docs completed since Jan 1998. Must have been rejected by PBS & be 28-30 min. or 55-60 min. in length. Cats: labor, environment, cultural minorities, media democracy, women's issues, gay/lesbian, consumer, children & youth. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Cash award: $500 to best in each cat. Winners honored at

press conference. Films will be shown at CIPB chapter "ready for PBS" doc festivals in cities around country throughout the year. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: CIPB, Doc Fest Coordinator, 1029 Vermont Ave., NW, Ste. 800, Washington DC 20005; (202) 638-6880; klconner@cais.com; www.cipbonline.org

SCRIPTAPALOOZA 3RD ANNUAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION. Grand prize: $25,000. Deadlines: postmarked Jan. 5 (early, $40), Mar. 5 (first deadline, $45), April 16 (late entry, $50). Contact: 7775 Sunset Blvd. PMB 200, Hollywood, CA 90046; (323) 654-5809; info@scriptapalooza.com

THE BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION NATIONAL STUDENT SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION is designed to promote and recognize outstanding student scripts in categories of feature film, short film & television series. All full- & part-time students, undergraduate or graduate, in U.S. institutions of higher education. Awards: $200 check, software from Screenplay Systems Inc., book of choice from Focal Press. Deadline: Jan. Contact: Broadcast Education Association; Department of Communications; California State University, Fullerton, CA 92834; (714) 278-5399; fax: 278-2209; efink@fullerton.edu; www.marquette.edu/bea/write/STU-00-COMP.htm

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. 10 entries chosen as winners; top 2 receive $100, other 8 receive $50, plus any revenue received from rental or sales. Max. length: 6 min. Entry fee: $20; add $10 (for each additional entry on same cassette); max. 3 entries per entrant. All entries must incl. entry form. Tapes & boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS or DV. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Include s.a.s.e. if want tapes returned. Deadline: postmarked 1st Sat. in Feb. (annually). Contact: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010. www.videoshorts.com

BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

In November 1999 the Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting launched its national campaign to reform public broadcasting as a public trust. Feeling PBS is too dependent on corporate and government influence, CIPB hopes to empower community groups and democratize local stations' programming and governance. CIPB invites documentary makers who have been rejected by PBS to send in their films, especially if it was because their topic was controversial or funding came from public interest or labor groups. The goal is to stimulate local PBS stations into recognizing their mandate to serve the community. See listing.

CIPB
CITIZENS FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Conferences • Workshops

7TH INT'L FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES ANNUAL OPEN DAY: Jan. 14, San Francisco, a full day of panels & networking opportunities w/ key int'l film financiers & buyers. The only day of IFFCON w/ registration open to the public. Topics include: Pitch Perfect, how to sell your idea & Funding the Future: the digital wave. Registration fee: $150. Info & registration: (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

FROM TODAY: A CONFERENCE OF ELECTRONICALLY MEDIATED DOC WORK. March 15-17, Providence, RI. Hosted by Brown University's Scholarly Technology Group. Conference for doc producers & publishers focusing on new technologies for fieldwork, production & distribution. Conference includes panel discussions & presentations of new doc work & practical seminars addressing techniques & strategies facilitated by electronic tools. Seeking participation from anyone interested in presenting or discussing their electronically mediated doc work. Contact: (401) 863-9313; fromtoday@brown.edu; www.stg.brown.edu/conferences/fromtoday

INTERNATIONAL FILM SEMINARS INC. is a NY-based nonprofit organization est. 1960. We have evolved from small, informal gathering of filmmakers & students to become a respected, est. media arts institution. We are recognized as a leader in continuing tradition of doc & other independent film & video in their production, exhibition, scholarship & study. Contact: International Film Seminar, 462 Broadway, Ste 510, New York, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax: 925-3482; ifsnyc@ aol.com

SCRIPTS WANTED FOR INDEPENDENT FILM ACTING CLASSES. See your scenes shot on real locations with our actors trained specifically for Independent films. Use this as a way to rewrite your scripts & scenes. Send to: The Acting Factory, 38 S. Federal Hwy, Dania, FL 33004.

SOCIETY FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC EDUCATION, 38TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE, Savannah, GA, Feb. 15-18. Conference featuring diverse & challenging imagemakers, panelists & presenters. Contact: Society for Photographic Education, Box 2811, Daytona Beach, FL 32120; (904) 255-8131 x. 3944; SocPhotoEd@aol.com

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL 2001 FILM & VIDEO PRODUCTION WORKSHOP. Workshop emphasizes training & support of people of color who have limited resourses & access to mainstream educational institutions & traditional training programs within film/video industry. Intensive 5 month program focuses on preproduction, production & postproduction. Primary objective to have each member produce, write, direct & edit 2 projects. Workshop begins April. Prior film/video experience recommended but not required. Cost of workshop is $500. Deadline: Jan 12. Contact: Third World Newsreel, 545 8th Ave., 10th fl., New York, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277; fax 594-6417; twn@twn.org; www.twn.org

Films • Tapes Wanted

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 productions on visual arts topics. Productions about artists of color & multicultural arts projects welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4506; fax: 399-4507; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo, NY cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min. on 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi-8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & s.a.s.e. for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172; squeaky@pce.net

BIJOU MATINEE is a showcase for independent shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions welcome & should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, New York, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre/subject matter. Deadline: on-going. Send tapes & s.a.s.e. to: The Independent Film & Video Series, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 5th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Info/details: (718) 832-0018 x. 8.

CURATOR SEEKS SHORT VIDEO/FILM WORKS (under 15 min.) for ongoing video/film showcases at Washington DC area art galleries. All genres considered. Send VHS preview tapes to: Robert Parrish, 1215 N. Vermont St., Arlington, VA 22201. Send s.a.s.e. for return of preview tapes. hoppervideo@erols.com

CYSTATION seeking short films/videos & flash animations for 24 hour Internet distribution. We actively promote filmmakers on our site & are devoted to the independent artist. Check out web site for info or send films to: CyStation Submissions, Box 68, Carlsbad, CA 92018; www.CyStation.com

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING FILM PROGRAM, hosted by Film Society of Lincoln Center, seeking original films or videos, from 1-20 min., to include w/ monthly screenings of open-captioned featured films at Walter Reade Theater. Films w/ artistic involvement from deaf artists preferred, but not required. Seeking original work that can be understood by deaf audience—dialogue must be subtitled. Send 1/2" video copy to The Film Society of Lincoln Center, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Film Program, 165 W. 65th St., 4th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; sbensman@dti.net

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by independent producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS preview, Beta, VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.dutv.org

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts, feature works-in-progress & web films seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FIREWATER FILMS, only year-round short film series in NYC, seeks short film submissions (cats: narrative, doc, animation & experimental). Films shown on both VHS & 16mm formats at Big Top Theater. Contact: Firewater Films, Box 20039, NY, NY 10025; (212) 414-5419; fax: 724-8190; www.firewaterfilms.com

INDUSTRIAL TV: cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, subversive, animation & underground works for inclusion in fall season. Controversial, uncensored & subversive material encouraged. Guaranteed exposure in NYC area. Contact.

AIVF

With the mediamaking landscape morphing almost daily, AIVF keeps you on top of new developments, opportunities, initiatives, people, and advocacy in the field...

AIVF
ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

THE INDEPENDENT

Through The Independent, keep up to date with new product reviews, distributors and funders, and profiles of makers who understand what being independent is all about...

the Independent
FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

JOIN US

With our low-cost membership giving you production discounts, access to affordable health insurance, as WELL as our resources, can you afford not to join?

www.aivf.org

OPPORTUNITIES

Edmund Varuolo, c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

KQED-TV, public television serving San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, looking for independent docs & dramas 6-30 min. for broadcast acquisition. Contact: Scott Dwyer, (415) 553-2218; sdwyer@kqed.org

MICROCINEMA, INC./BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting short video, film & digital-media submissions of 30 min. or less on ongoing basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid an honorarium & will qualify for non-exclusive distribution deal, including additional license fees for int'l offline & online sales. Looking for short experimental, narrative, alternative, avant-garde, humorous, dramatic, erotic, subversive, animation, & underground works. Works selected will, in most cases, continue on to nat'l & int'l venues for additional screenings & may qualify for our DVD/VHS home video compilations as well as netcasting via microcinema.com. Submit VHS/ or S-VHS (NTSC preferred) clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number & any support materials incl. photos to Microcinema, Inc., 2318 2nd Ave., PMB 313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; Info/details: (206) 568-6051; info@microcinema.com; www.microcinema.com

MUSIC VIDEOS WANTED. Submit original music videos for a super series for the electromagnetic spectrum. Any genre or subject. Amateurs, students, & professionals welcome. No quality too bad or too good. Submit VHS cassette, email address & s.a.s.e. for return materials to: Grrrowl Productions, 24 Walker Drive, Belle Mead, NJ 08502; grrrowlproductions@yahoo.com; www.geocities.com/grrrowlproductions/

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project) call: (202) 775-7860.

NYC PUBLIC ACCESS SHOW SEEKS WORK. I am a video artist, musician, poet. Since 1997 I have been producing a weekly conceptual video art program on Time Warner (public access TV) in Manhattan & Brooklyn. Titled Snacontt Arts. I am looking for work from different artists to show on the program. Contact: Constant, Box 050050, Brooklyn, NY 11205; snacontt@aol.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from independent filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede evening's feature, plus brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. considered for regular group shows of independent filmmakers. Only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; ph/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

OPPORTUNITY FOR VIDEO PRODUCERS to cablecast their projects New Castle community TV station in Chappaqua, NY. Station manager is in the process of revamping programming line up. Preferrably New Castle or Westchester residents, although not required. Contact: NCCTV@hotmail.com

POTHOLE PICTURES, a revitalized 450 seat movie house in Shelburne Falls, MA, seeks 35mm films for "Meet the Director" series—showing of your film followed by discussion & reception. Any length/genre. Connection to New England whether thru subject matter, filming locations, or hometown of filmmakers helpful but not necessary. Send VHS preview tape to Fred DeVecca, Pothole Pictures, Box 368, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; frogprod@javanet.com

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS seek public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-2534; efreedma@fau.edu

REEL ALTERNATIVE FILM SALON; Brooklyn's original microcinema featuring indie filmmakers of color, seeks film & script submissions for second season. All genres & formats welcome. Special interest in female action flicks for March, & animation for April. Film (submitted on VHS) & script submissions must incl. synopsis, bio & $10 (check/m.o.). Films screened monthly & scripts staged quarterly. Contact: (718) 670-3616; www.ighmultimedia.com

THE SHORT LIST: This showcase for American & int'l short films, airs nat'ly on PBS. Pays $100/min. All genres 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced in association w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards five Kodak product grants annually to selected filmmakers on series. Submit on VHS. For appl., send s.a.s.e. to: Jack Ofield, Director, The Production Center, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; ShortList@mail.sdsu.edu; www.theshortlist.cc

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of 6 artists who travel on 11-day, 9-city route, now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists asked to submit application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & $20 entry fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor any works-in-progress. Note: Some Circuit sites do not have film projection capabilities. After pre-screening process, 40 finalists will be judged by a selection panel in April 2001. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2001. Contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526.

SUBMIT WORK FOR POSSIBLE EXHIBITION in late 2000 or early 2001 concerning personal experiences of adopting children or being adopted. Interested in all visual media. Send cover letter stating interest in & artistic history with subject, slides, videotapes, etc. to Karen van Meenen, c/o Afterimage, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; Re: Adoption Exhibit.

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL, one of the oldest alternative media organizations in U.S., is seeking film & video submissions of short & feature length docs, narratives, experimental & other works attentive to intersections of race, class & gender. Projects that address other issues of political & social interest also welcome. Formats: 1/2" VHS. Send submissions, synopsis of the film & director's bio to: Third World Newsreel, Attn: Noel Shaw, 545 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277; fax: 594-6417; twn@twn.org; www.twn.org

TV/HOME VIDEO production company seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films in VHS or S-VHS to: Salt City Productions/Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13220.

WGBH-TV, BOSTON: Ever thought about broadcasting your independent film on TV? WGBH is committed to supporting independent filmmakers, incl. those who may never have considered local TV broadcast. Looking for independent films & videos to be part of ongoing local independent film series "Viewpoint," which showcases works from New England & around the world. Films selected for broadcast will receive honorarium from WGBH. Tapes accompanied by s.a.s.e. will be returned. Broadcast masters formats: DigiBeta, Beta SP, D5 or D3. Cannot accept programming produced for public access cable. Send VHS screening copies of your doc, narrative film, or animation (no length requirements) to: Chad Davis, Viewpoint, WGBH-TV, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 300-2647; chad_davis@ wgbh.org

WYBE-TV PHILADELPHIA STORIES: We are looking for entries that tell a story as unique as the city itself. Series will include acquiring programs already produced, providing finishing funds to projects & actually funding a few key original programs. Call for entries avail. Feb. 25. Deadline: May 15. Download call-for-entries at www.wybe.org

ZOIE FILMS INTERNET FESTIVAL, March. Deadline: Feb. 2. Annual festival will present approx. 30-50 films during year & showcases more than 60 filmmakers. New domestic & foreign films, fiction films & docs, animation, experimental, children's programs & film shorts will be incl. in fest. Awards incl. Zoie Star Award for Best Picture (domestic & foreign) & People's Choice Awards. Contact: Zoie Films, 539 Salem Woods Dr., Marietta, GA 30067; (404) 816-0602; fax: 560-6777; www.zoiefilms.com/filmfestxprt.htm

Publications

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE OF *AFTERIMAGE*, The Journal of Media Arts & Cultural Criticism. Seeking articles on subject of "Using Media Arts as a Therapeutic Tool." Articles to be published include exhibition & book reviews, event reports, profiles of individuals & organizations, personal essays & scholarly, research-based feature articles. *Afterimage* Writer's Guidelines avail. upon request. Send completed (unpublished) articles, abstracts, outlines or proposals with cover letter & clips to Karen van Meenen, Editor, *Afterimage*, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607.

CANYON CINEMA announces publication of a major new catalog of avant-garde/experimental films & video tapes for rent & sale. This 500-page volume, the Canyon Cinema Catalog 2000 (#8), contains 285 illustrations & describes more than 3,500 works of cinematic art by 370 filmmakers. Pat O'Neill designed wrap around cover. Also 25th Anniversary Catalog (incl. 1993-5 supplements) w/ over 3,500 film & video titles is avail. for $20. ph/fax: (415) 626-2255; canyoncinema@usa.net; www.canyoncinema.com [Also see profile of Canyon Cinema in this month's Distributor FAQ, p. 41]

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim numerous tax exemptions avail. in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp. & NY State Dept. of Taxation & Finance, 51-pg. reference guide can be obtained from NY State Governor's Office or Tax Office. Contact: NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & TV Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369.

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Find an independent audience! The IPA's new directory to independent magazine world can give you the name & number of the editor you need. For just $24.95 (plus $3.05 S&H) Annotations: A Guide To The Independent Press can open up a world of diverse & exciting contacts. For order send check to: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 634-4401; www.indypress.org

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE (IFFCON 2000) transcripts of 7th conf. avail. IFFCON is North America's premier financing event for independent film. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers incl. "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Financing with Int'l TV." Send $46 to: IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: The Essential Resource for Making Independent Film, Video, & New Media. 2000 edition. Includes nat'l & int'l festival listings, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media funding sources & schools. Contact: 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org

THE JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeks written reviews of University Film & Video Association member films for possible inclusion in journal. Send approx. 5 double-spaced pages to: Temple University, Dept. of Film & Media Arts, 14E Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8472; lerickson3@aol.com

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Nonprofit Incorporation & Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made. Contact: (212) 319-2910.

Resources • Funds

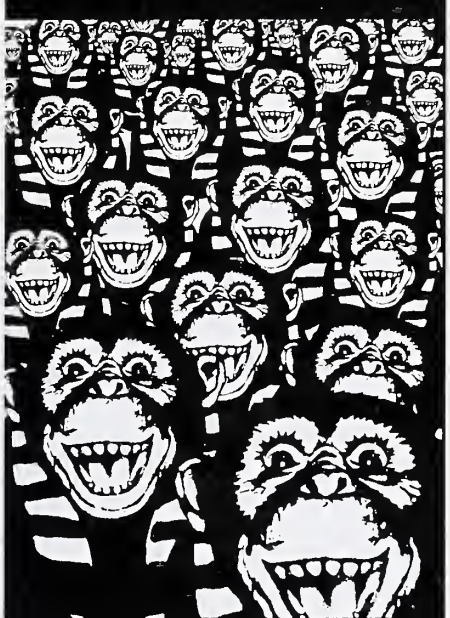
8x10GLOSSY.COM: On-line artists' co-op offers free listing for all actors, technicians & orgs in directory & searchable database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of bulletin board. Send s.a.s.e. to: Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave, #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

ARTS LINK COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS allow U.S. artists and arts orgs to undertake projects overseas with colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe with grants from $2,500-$10,000. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of U.S. Deadline: postmarked by Jan. 18. Contact: Arts Link, CEC International Partners, 12 W. 31 St., New York, NY 10001; artslink@cecip.org

BAVC JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Bay Area Video Coalition Job Resource Center provides S.F. residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for on-line job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books & job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-5 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org; www.bavc.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 1 St, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwrit-

call for entries
the 8th new york underground film festival
march 7-13, 2001

deadline dec 1
late deadline jan 1
p 212.675.1137
f 212.675.1152
festival@nyuff.com
www.nyuff.com

ing software in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

COMPOSER CONTACT ONLINE CATALOGUE: Harvestworks Digital Media Center presents interactive database to learn more about composers who can be commissioned to write & record compositions for various projects. MP3 samples & biographical info can be accessed. Contact: harvestw@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

CUSTOM HANDCRAFTED IDEAS FOR SALE: Gulleycom Int'l, a small, family-owned company dedicated to creating the most individual advertising & communications, with each word spelled by hand, each graphic lovingly handcrafted. Ads, posters, logos, one-of-a-kind projects & odd lots. If you call, ask for "Granpa"—he'll be out back, shucking headlines. (317) 974-0369; thebigkahuna@gulleycom.com; www.gulleycom.com

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER offers grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max. amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appl. reviewed monthly. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Program Dir., ETVC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org

FREE SOUNDTRACK SONGS if you credit song in your film credits. Professionally produced & mastered CD with 22 punk, rock, alternative, dance, love songs. Call John at Road Rash Music (ASCAP publisher); (703) 481-9113.

FREE VIDEO RECORDING: Open call to independent artists for Promote Art Works Inc.'s "Spontaneous Combustion" series, which airs monthly on Brooklyn Community Access Television. All fields—dance, visual art, poetry, video, music & theater—entertained. No works in progress. Quality videotapes accepted for editing. Call Kathleen at (718) 797-3116.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants up to $50,000 for production/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, combine artistry & intellectual clarity, can be completed within 1 year of award & have broadcast potential. Deadline: April 4. Contact: Nat'l Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500 x. 205.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on issue in one of Foundation's 2 major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-pg letter to: Alyce Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: Summer seminars & institutes for college & university teachers. Seminars incl. 15 participants working in collaboration w/ 1 or 2 leading scholars. Institutes provide intensive collaborative study of texts, historical periods & ideas to undergrad teaching in the humanities. Detailed info & appl. materials are avail. from project directors. Contact: (202) 606-8463; sem-inst@neh.gov; www.neh.gov

NATIONAL LATINO COMMUNICATIONS CENTER is a media arts production resource center that supports, produces & syndicates Latino programming for public television. Purpose is to empower Latinos in U.S. throughout the broadcast communications media. To that end, its mission is to: provide to the nation quality programming which illuminates the diversity of nat'l Latino ethos through expressions of its arts, cultures & histories; provide a sustained institutional framework for expressing Latino voice in the nat'l, int'l film & communications industry; provide training & related assistance to develop & support Latino media talent whose creative visions will transform the Latino experience into compelling images of a people. Write: NLCC, 3171 Los Feliz Blvd., Ste 200, Los Angeles, CA 90039; (213) 663-5606; www.nlcc.com

NEW BOOKLET AVAILABLE to help individuals obtain money from the government. 48-page booklet gives info on how & where to get free money, free advice & free services from the government. Send $5 to cover the cost of printing, postage & handling to: Free Enterprise Institute, Government Giveaway Booklet Offer, Dept. GGB-407-1, Box 96071, Washington, DC 20090; www.FreeEnterpriseInstitute.org

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting appl. for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEWENGLANDFILM.COM is a unique on-line resource that provides local film & video professionals w/ searchable industry directory, listings of local events, screenings, jobs, calls for entries & upcoming productions, in addition to filmmaker interviews & industry news. Reaching over 11,000 visitors each month. All articles & listings on sites free to read: www.nefilm.com

NEWPROJECT.NET provides a new vehicle for producers in search of partnerships, financing & distribution for projects. Online database of presentations of projects in development, in production, or recently completed. NewProject.net is place where professionals can "publish" & announce copyrighted new projects & present them to programming execs, distribs, potential underwriters, investors & other partners.

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM AND TELEVISION is the preeminent entertainment industry association for women in NYC dedicated to helping women reach highest levels of achievement in film, TV & new media. NYWIFT produces over 50 innovative educational programs & special events each year. Organization's membership numbers more than 1,100 women & men working in all areas of film, TV & new media industries. NYWIFT is part of a network of 40 women in film organizations worldwide, representing more than 1,000 members. For membership & intern/mentor program info., contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10016; staff@nywift.org; www.nywift.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by the Independent Film Channel, was established to provide finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers with low-budget, English-language features from U.S. & abroad. Selected films receive assistance with postproduction, implementing a festival strategy & securing distribution. Through Agenda 2000—the production arm of Next Wave Films—exceptionally talented filmmakers w/ established body of work can receive production financing and assistance for features shot on digital video & intended for theatrical release. Both fiction & non-fiction films considered for finishing funds & Agenda 2000. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405. (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

NYS COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Individual Artists Program announces availability of production funds for video, radio, audio, installation work & computer-based art. Maximum award $25,000. Artist must also be sponsored by nonprofit organization. Deadline: March 1. Contact: Don Palmer: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7063; dpalmer@nysca.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equip. program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, experimental, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Film Grant, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; filmgrant@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send s.a.s.e. w/ 55¢ stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND for writers & editors w/ AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 334-1660.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION invites applicants for its 2000-01 Scholars in Residence Program, providing support for full-time research & study in manuscript & artifact collections at any Commission facility, including PA state archives, State Museum of PA & 26 historic sites & museums in the state. Collaborative Residency Program funds research that relates to the interpretive mission & advances goals of any PHMC program or facility. Proposals for a collaborative residency are to be filed jointly by the interested scholar & host program/facility. Both programs are open to all who are conducting research on PA history, incl. academic scholars, public sector history professionals, independent scholars, graduate students, educators, writers, filmmakers & others. Residencies avail. for 4 to 12 weeks between May 1 & April 30, 2002, at rate of $1,500 per month. Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Division of History, PA Historical & Museum Commission, Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108; (717) 787-3034; lshopes@phme.state.pa.us

PORTLAND, OREGON FILMMAKING GRANTS: Digital Media Education Center of Portland, Oregon announcing open call for submissions for their prestigious Avid Film Camp 2000 program. The 5-year-old program affords a boost to independent feature directors looking for means to complete films, while offering Avid authorized training to career editors. Film Camp films have gone on to such venues as Sundance, Film Festival, South by Southwest, & The IFP Market. Submissions for consideration must be feature-length projects with shooting completed. Projects are accepted on rolling basis. Contact: Kate Wolf at Digital Media Education Center, 5201 SW Westgate Dr., Ste. 114, Portland, OR 97221; (503) 297-

2324; www.filmcamp.com

PR FOR YOUR INDIE FILM: Open City Communications provides high-impact, cost-effective public relations support for film & video releases, webcasts, festivals, on-line sites, books, special events, creative artists & other entities in need of top-quality media attention. Contact: Opencity@aol.com; www.open-city.com

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council provides funding for IL nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency ranges 5 to 30 hrs. IAC will support 50% of artist's fee (up to $1,000 plus travel; local sponsor must provide remaining 50%) plus other expenses. Appls. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for avail. of funds. Special Assistance Grants also avail. for Illinois artists & Illinois non-for-profit organizations. Contact: IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; www.state.il.us/agency/iac

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. 2 project categories: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. Contact: Soros Doc Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; www.soros.org/sdf

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants' fees for resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; www.info@arts.state.il.us

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post production services at discounted rates. Contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

THIRD ANNUAL CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FUND: $500-$2,000 postproduction completion grant for any length & genre on super 8, 16mm or 35mm. Emphasis placed on works that fit CUFF's mission to promote films & videos that innovate in form or content. Deadline: Feb. 5. Contact: CUFF, 3109, N. Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 327-FILM; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org

US-MEXICO FUND FOR CULTURE, sponsored/funded by Mexico's Nat'l Fund For Culture & the Arts (FONCA), Bancomer Cultural Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation announces binational artist proposals. Deadline: April 28, 2000. Contact: Beatriz Nava, U.S.-Mexico Fund For Culture, Londres 16, 3rd fl., Col. Juarez, 06600, Mexico D.F; (525) 592-5386; fax: 566-8071; usmexcult@fidemexusa.org.mx; www.fideicomisomexusa.org.mx

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BALLANTINE FILMS.COM; an on-line streaming and resource site for film and video professionals, independent filmmakers, students, animators, actors, screenwriters, producers & film enthusiasts is currently accepting film and videos for free onine streaming. In addition, site is seeking entries for our free industry directory, including talent lists, script library, production facilities, and more. Contact: info@ballantinefilms.com or visit web site for more information: www.ballantinefilms.com

BROADCAST YOUR FILM on the Internet! WhoneedsTV.com is currently accepting submissions for independent films. Unlike other sites, you keep all the rights and control over your film. info@WhoneedsTV.com or (917) 282-2857 for details.

BUDGETS/INVESTOR PACKAGE: Experienced line producer will prepare script breakdowns, shooting schedules & detailed budgets. Movie Magic equipped. MC, Visa, Amex. Indie rates negotiable. Mark (212) 340-1243.

BUYINDIES.COM; The founders of NewEnglandFilm.com have created another site: BuyIndies.com, a community to buy & sell independent films. If you have copies of your movie available on VHS or DVD, then you can join as a seller and list any or all of your titles. BuyIndies.com handles the ecommerce, customer service & promotion; you handle the shipping. Filmmakers keep all rights to the film. Already over 45,000 titles have been gathered. You can find out more info at: www.buyindies.com/sell/ or email: info@buyindies.com

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THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Ave., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-6242; TheCinemaG@aol.com; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

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ANDREW DUNN, Director of photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: *Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light*. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com

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THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film- and videomakers. AIVF partners with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus the field's best source of festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and services. Special issues highlight subjects including experimental media, new technologies, regional activity, and non-fiction work. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INFORMATION

FIVF publishes a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

Our New York City Filmmaker Resource Library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer. We also provide information referrals, answering hundreds of calls and e-mails each week!

WWW.AIVF.ORG

Stay connected through www.aivf.org, featuring the lowdown on AIVF services, resource listings and links, web-original articles, advocacy information, and discussion areas. Special on-line services for members include distributor and funder profiles and archives of The Independent - much more to come!

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase group insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons are based in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in local communities. To find the salon nearest you, check The Independent or visit the Regional Salon section of the AIVF website.

ADVOCACY

Since AIVF members first gathered over 25 years ago, AIVF has been consistently outspoken in its efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our field. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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DP WITH CAMERA: Client list, package details (cameras and editing), view clips/stills. To order reel or contact, visit: www.kozma.com

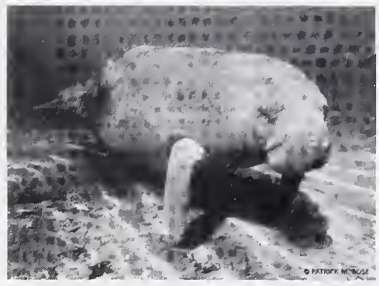
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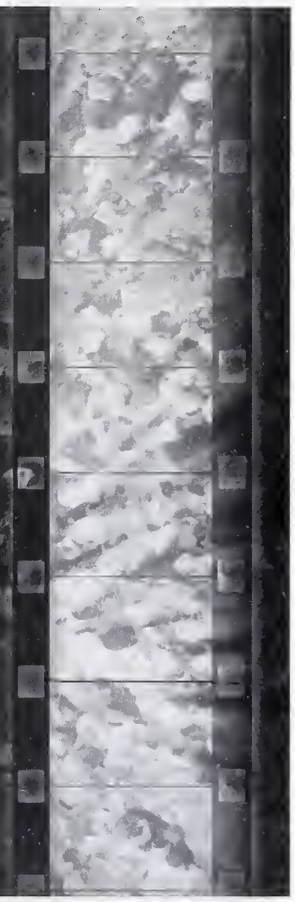
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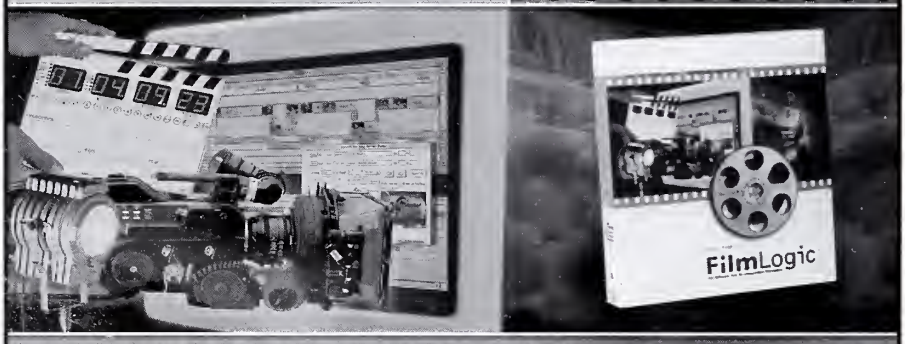
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AN IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING RATES

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

You've had eight, long years to get your classified ads into *The Independent* for the low, low cost of $25 (AIVF member rate, 240 characters). Our rates will increase beginning January 1, 2001.

So don't delay, place your ad by December 31st to get next year's advertising at this year's prices. Frequency discounts available.

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Office Hours

NEW RESOURCE LIBRARY HOURS:
TUES.-FRI. 11-6; WED. 11-9

The AIVF Office/Filmmaker's Resource Library is located at 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

PLEASE NOTE THAT AIVF WILL CLOSE FOR THE HOLIDAYS
DECEMBER 20-JANUARY 2

While we are out, remember that many of your questions may be answered on our voice mail information system, or our web resource at www.aivf.org

December Events

AFTER HOURS
MEMBER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE

Every Wednesday 6-9 p.m.

Our Filmmaker Resource Library houses hundreds of titles—from essential directories and trade magazines to sample grant proposals and budgets. After Hours is the opportune time to utilitize the library, renew your membership, ask questions, or buy FIVF-published books.

AIVF'S RENOWNED HOLIDAY PARTY!



When: Monday,
December 4, 8-11 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
To register/hear more details:
Please RSVP (212) 807-1400 x 301

Don't miss the annual bash that keeps gettin' merrier every year! Fabulous hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be offered—with plenty of good cheer, of course!

AIVF Member Survey

AIVF received over 700 replies to the membership and magazine readership surveys we circulated this summer. The response was much greater than we expected. Although we are only partway through tabulating the data, we wanted to take a moment to share preliminary statistics, interests, and comments we have collected. Please visit www.aivf.org for more comprehensive information!

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

AIVF continues to represent a remarkably diverse constituency. The average age of a respondent is 39, they've been working in the field for 14 years, they make 70% of their income from media, they live in the East, and they average an income of $44,500 a year.

But these "averages" obscure the remarkable variations within our community:

Age:
25% Under 30
32% 30-40
26% 40-50
17% over 50

Ethnicity:
82% white
6% African American
6% Asian
4% Latino
2% "other"

Geography:
32% NY state
23% other East Coast
6% South
9% Midwest
6% West
5% SouthWest
17% West Coast
2% non-US

Primary area of work:
12% Teacher
4% Student
62% Maker
17% Craftsperson
5% Media Arts Administrator

Years in the field: Our longest-term producers created their first distributed works in 1962. 49% were creating work before the break out of *sex lies and videotape* (1990); 96% before *The Blair Witch Project* hit Sundance (1999).

Works in distribution: Producer members average 22 works in distribution. Those who work in film average 15 works, those who work in video, 28. If we omit our most prolific directors (those with over 50 works), the remainder average 6.

Media:
39% Film (26% using 16mm)
61% Video (27% using DV)

Genres:
27% Narrative
46% Doc
20% Experimental
4% Multimedia/installation
3% Animation

RESPONSE TO AIVF PROGRAMS

"AIVF provides a voice for true independents, a sense of community, and important information."

"AIVF does not and has not SOLD OUT."

The top five responses to each of our prompts to rank AIVF programs and services are:

Most valuable AIVF programs & services
- *The Independent*
- Sense of community
- Books
- Workshops
- Advice & referral (information services)

Best part of *The Independent*
- Features
- Technology articles
- Funding articles
- Festival listings
- Distribution articles

Best part of www.aivf.org

- Information resources
- *Independent* articles
- On-line enrollment
- Regional Information
- Event Information

Most exciting ideas for our web site

- Festival database
- Archive of *Independent* articles
- Member directory
- Exhibitors database
- Expanded resource links

TOP ISSUES FACING THE FIELD

On our website we have compiled many of the thought-provoking comments we received; again, we encourage you to visit! In the meantime, we will close with the sobering responses to our prompt for the most pressing issues facing the media arts field:

- Funding for non-commercial work
- Preserving independent voices in the face of corporate conglomeration
- Access to broadcast outlets
- Developing audiences
- Alternative exhibition opportunities

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• Animation Stand	$ 85/hr.
• Digital Audio Post	$ 85/hr.

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December 14 - 2000 DEADLINE for film submissions
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- industry symposium and more...

The AIVF Regional Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Visit the salons section at www.aivf.org for more info.

Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

Albany, NY:
When: First Wed. of each month, 6:30 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Anne del Castillo, (512) 322-0145; anne@austinfilm.org

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE, (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: John Richardson, johnwr@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

AIVF DC SALON MEDIA MAKERS 2000

MAY 10, WASHINGTON DC.

A screening of short films and videos by independent women media makers was a true success. AIVF's DC Salon, in conjunction with the National Museum of Women in the Arts, hosted an array of diverse, multi-cultural quality media works. Eight experimental, creative, ambitious and passionate works were nominated to screen to a full house: The Dream (Judith Bradsma); *(pictured)* The Book of Ezekiel (LaTrice Dixon); Aisha (Parine Jaddo); Aychlan Portrait (Elida Schogt); Women Forward: Mujeres Adelante (Linlana Fasanella); The Safe House (Laura Smith); and Bruce (Ruth Sergel). The AIVF DC Salon thanks all involved. Event proceeds went to the C4 Foundation.



Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45 pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Lincoln, NE:
When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Where: Telepro, 1844 N Street
Contact: Dorothy Booraem, (402) 476-5422; dot@inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Los Angeles, CA:
Contact: Lee Lew Lee, aivf_la@pacbell.net

Milwaukee, WI:
When: 1st Wednesday of the month
Contact: Brooke Maroldi, (414) 276-8563; www.mifs.org/salon

New Brunswick, NJ:
Contact: Allen Chou, (732) 321-0711; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668; dgproductions@hotmail.com

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

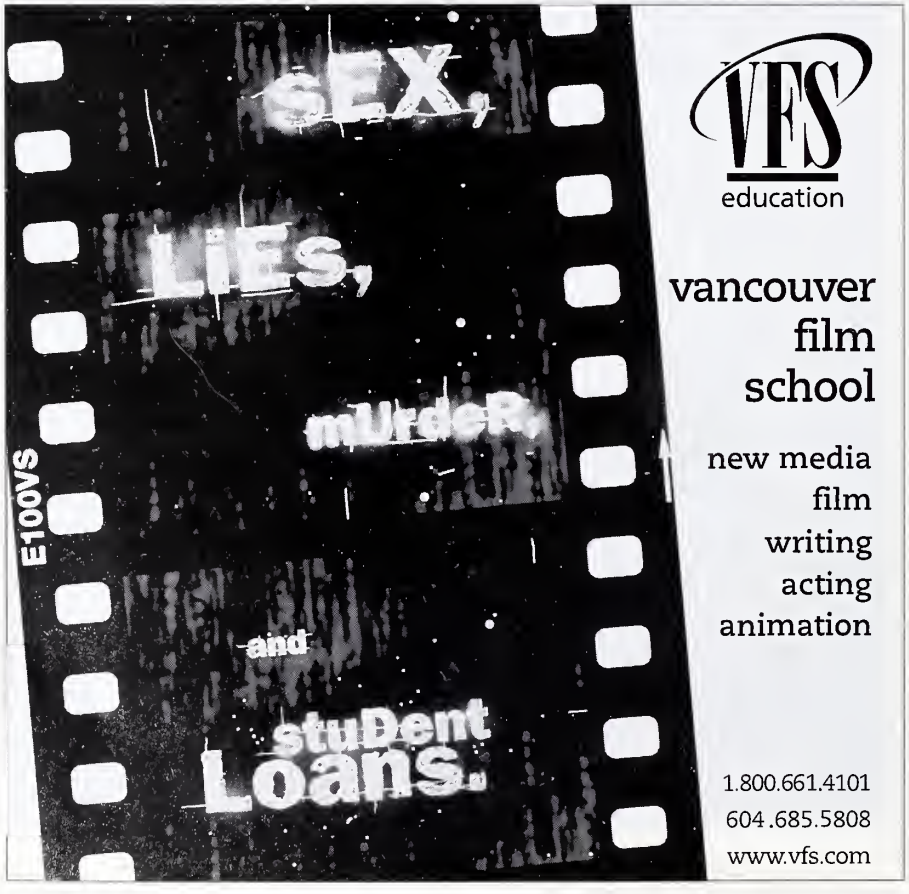
Rochester, NY:
Contact: Kate Kressman-Kehoe, (716) 244-8629; ksk@netacc.net

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Tucson, AZ:
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

AIVF has resources to assist enthusiastic and committed members who wish to start a salon in their own community. Please call (212) 807-1400 x. 236 or e-mail members@aivf.org for information.



IN & OUT

By Jim Colvill



(above) Kyle Henry's *University Inc.*

Pillow talk: R.T. Lee and Jonathon Roessler in Quentin Lee's *Drift.*

How has the experience of higher education changed over the last forty years? Have we exchanged educating students with indoctrinating consumers? What has become of student power in general? These are questions raised and examined in Kyle Henry's documentary ***University Inc.*** about the corporate takeover of academia. The film documents the closing down of a repertory film program at the University of Texas-Austin, in order to demonstrate the corporate ideology now prevalent in the running of the public university. Henry interviews the activists trying to save the program, and, using an approach similar to Michael Moore's, the university bureaucrats attempting to close it. The investigation moves beyond the closing of the film program to include the university's past, evaluating the closure against a tradition of corporate-mindedness. Throughout history students have been at the forefront of social and political change, and past student protests are also looked at in order to highlight the general apathy of the current student body. With this film Henry wishes to bring to the public's attention corporate interventions on campuses that suppress such dissent and critique. It is a battle cry to take arms against this tyranny of the corporation, and reclaim universities for the students themselves. The film has just finished production and, appropriately, has been screened at several universities. Henry is currently seeking an educational distributor and an international TV broadcast. All sales enquiries to: The 7th Floor, 9 W. 31 St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 244-2317; general@the7thfloor.com

Writer/director Jim Fogarty says that he turned down various jobs in the world of film, including one at Disney, in order to pursue his own filmmaking ambitions. He has recently completed his first feature film, ***Waxing Gibbous***, which was made on a tiny budget in his home town of Warren, Ohio. The film takes place over a 24-hour period depicting, as Fogarty describes, "Four guys in their early 20s, all with separate problems, trying to decide where to go from here." The four childhood friends include a drug addict in huge debt, an artist lacking in self-confidence, a persistent womanizer seemingly indifferent to his fiancée, and a high school star athlete who never capitalized on his talents. They are all aimless people searching for an adult identity. Over the course of a night in a local bar small things happen to each character which help them look to the future, and reflect on the mistakes of their past. The film, shot on digital video, features an unknown, but promising cast. *Waxing Gibbous* won an honorable mention from the Film Council of Greater Columbus at the 48th Columbus International Film and Video Festival. Jim Fogarty, Two Ticks and the Dog Productions, 3110 Halsey Drive, Warren OH 44483; (330) 254-6702; Fogs1975@aol.com

The world of car towing and parking tickets forms the unlikely backdrop to a love story in Lisa France's recently completed short film, ***Love In Tow***. Set in New York, and featuring the late Quentin Crisp in his last filmed performance, the film is a romantic comedy about a woman (Lisa France) who is unlucky with both love and car parking. Failure in one leads to success in the other when she falls instantly in love with a petty cash thief as she is attempting to pick up her towed car. Although this is France's first film as director she has extensive experience in the film industry, working previously as an actress, and as a production assistant. *Love In Tow* won best comedy at Filmstock in England and was shown at the Atlanta Film and Video Festival. France is currently busy writing two feature films which she plans to direct, as well as executive producing various projects. Lisa France, lf4philm@aol.com

Shopping for Fangs director Quentin Lee drew from his own past experiences for his recent digital feature ***Drift***. The film was written after Lee suffered an intense break-up and is a gay drama about a young screenwriter facing three possibilities of a love triangle. The film was made over just twelve days with a tiny cast and crew, and was shot entirely on handheld digital video in order to achieve a fluid feel. Lee has been an advocate of digital video for some time and wishes to create an aesthetic best suited to it, one that does not attempt to replicate the look of film. Part of the budget for *Drift* was supplied by the Canada Council for the Arts which has funded the early works of David Cronenberg and Atom Egoyan. Quentin Lee, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., PMB 225, Beverly Hills CA 90211; (213) 382-8022; fax: (213) 382-5589; drift@margin-films.com; www.psychodandy.com

And in brief . . . First time filmmaker Bobbi J. Nye uses her father's real life story as a basis for her feature film ***Hometown Legend, The Bob Nye Story***. The film chronicles his life as a cop and later eccentric entrepreneur. Shot on DV, the film is currently being submitted to festivals. Bobbi J. Nye, (610) 929-8266. Also, Paul Bojack has just completed his first feature-length film, ***Glass, Necktie***, a film that examines deception and infidelity amongst a group of friends. The film has been screened at various venues and is currently seeking distribution. Paul Bojack; (310) 313-1557; glassnecktie@netscape.net

AIVF Members: Send info on works in progress or recently completed works to In & Out, *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013; intern@aivf.org

This column commemorates the 25th anniversity of AIVF. Every month, we have revisited the people, the struggles, the triumphs, and the issues of concern to independents and watched the evolution of the field as reflected in the pages of this magazine. Below are excerpts from the December issues from the magazine's launch in 1979 to the present.

"Forward-thinking individuals engaged in video and film production must make an effort to influence the evolution of their media. The future ought not to rest solely in the hands of corporate engineers."

David W. Leitner, 1981

"[Anger over lack of funding] only serves to reinforce the already prevalent notion within public television that independents are a pack of whiners who believe the system owes us a living."

Ralph Arlyck, 1982

"After several seasons of bowing to the Reagan Administration's arts funding priorities, Congress, in a burst of election year concern, has voted to restore the savaged arts budget."

Debra Goldman, 1983

"When I first arrived my idea was to catch people while they were working or while they were not looking at the camera: a very conventional documentary approach. But I realized that it is almost an illusion, because once I put the camera down the action would change."

Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1983

"If it were possible to show examples of these artist politicos, I am sure most of you would agree that they are the enemies of true art, instead of artists. Through the aid of Marxist evaluators in the cultural sphere, leftists in art are attempting to break down the standard to which artists of the past adhered."

Rep. George Dondero before Congress, 1985

"Film was the only medium capable of countering and invalidating the media-derived assumptions that much of the [African American] community had adopted. I wanted to modify black peoples' self-conceptions by utilizing dramatic forms."

Julie Dash, 1986

"Launching a successful feature film production is not unlike writing a well-made



script. The protagonist—the filmmaker—sets out with all good intentions to make the next *Down by Law* or *Working Girls* only to be met by obstacle after obstacle. The biggest obstacle is, of course, raising money."

Paula Schaap, 1987

"A screenwriter should have ears attuned to sound. Eyes that are sensitive to interesting characters. And a mind that can store in his or her mental file scattered scenes that the screenwriter could dig into when writing a script. [Above all else] one must have a capacity to *rewrite*."

Feleo Gonzalez, 1988

"The CPB should continue and expand its work and commitment to the minority communities in these creative ways in order to improve incorporation of minority programming and producers into the system and to help cultivate and further increase the participation of ethnic and racial audiences in public broadcasting."

Senator Daniel Inouye, 1989

"Once the great hope for democratizing television, public access has recently been subjected to editorial control from cable operators."

Peter Bowen, 1990

"How does one define black cinema? Would a definition include progressive films about blacks made by non-blacks, or even black-produced television shows and music videos—both of which have an indelible influence on dominant culture?"

Thomas Harris, 1990

"In an age where the couch potato is the ascendant and art houses are in decline, the video store claims a critical spot in the distribution of independent productions."

Ellen Levy, 1991

"Fiction, documentary, experimental, comedy, horror, thriller, animation, short. You may want to avoid traditional labels, but remember buyers love anything that helps them assess a film with one glance."

Karen Thorsen, 1992

"We need some really strong pioneers to make low-budget films, the kind we can just identify with, that don't necessarily have to have a whole lot of special effects. Just good strong stories"

Monty Ross, 1993

"[The language in *Clerks*] isn't vulgarity for the sake of vulgarity. This is natural dialog and these are really sweet guys. [They're] not going to inspire people to go out there and shoot people or light homes on fire."

Kevin Smith, 1994

"[Independents] can't afford to wear down the [MPAA] Appeals Board, and they can't afford to recut the negative time after time and create another print time after time. There is economic discrimination at work."

Jeff Lipsky, 1994

"The term 'independent' has become so hopelessly muddied, so that maybe half of what qualifies as independent just looks like low-budget Hollywood. Avant-garde film reminds us that there are people out there still truly making their own film."

Richard Peña, 1997

"Avant-garde film is probably the best set of teaching devices in existence. That people don't use these films more often in academic work is astonishing. I mean, if you want to get students to think, argue, talk, really reconsider their media training, their whole experience of a consumer culture, nothing is better."

Scott MacDonald, 1998

"The only really truthful way to deal with history is as a fiction. It's the only way you can be honest about it."

Todd Haynes, 1998

COMPILED BY JIM COLVILL

The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $112,000.

Millennium Campaign Fund

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

Corporate/Government/ Foundation Contributors

BET/Encore; District Cablevision; Home Box Office; New York State Council on the Arts; Ovation; Washington DC Film Society.

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